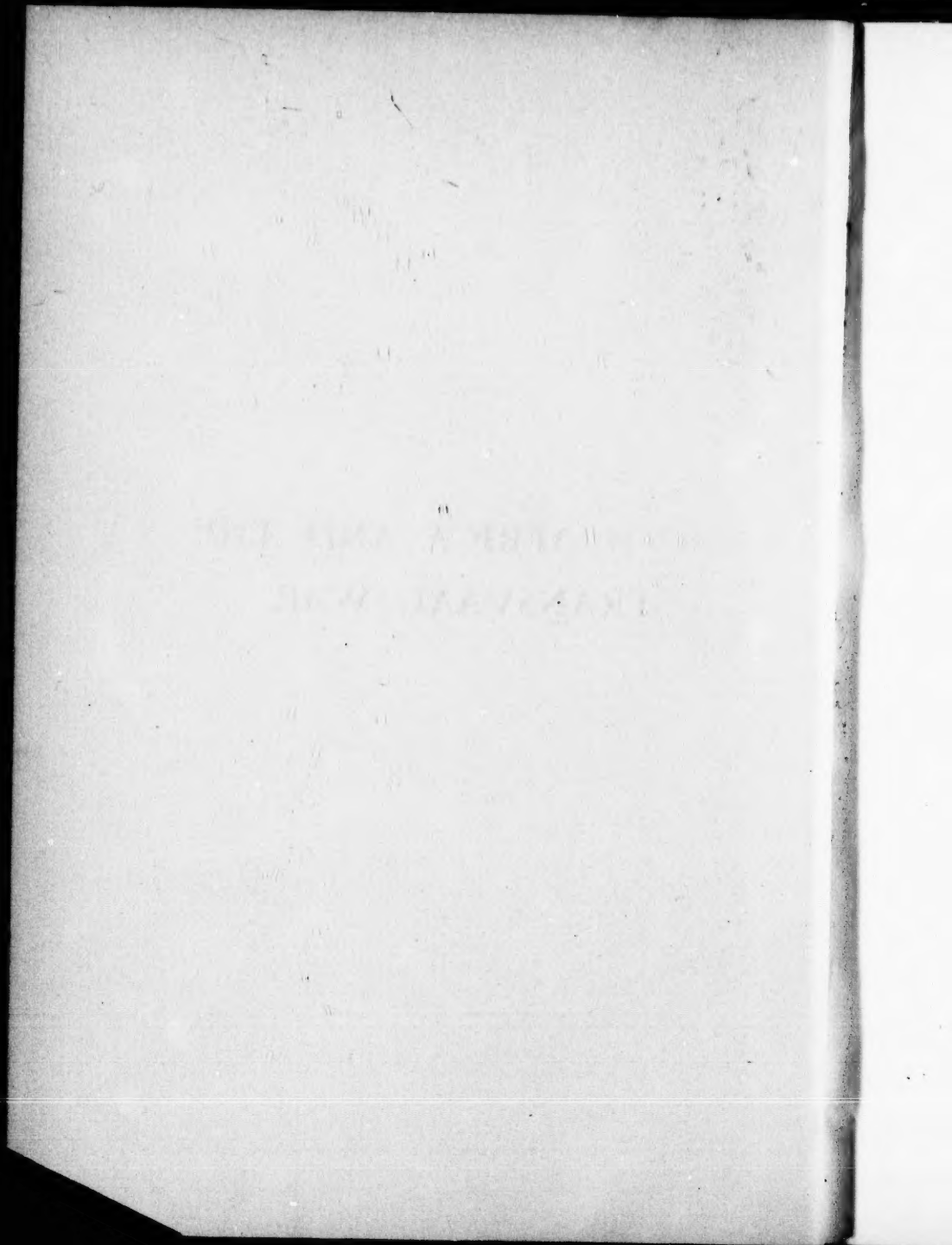




# SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

BY: LOUIS CRESWICKE.





**SOUTH AFRICA AND THE  
TRANSVAAL WAR**







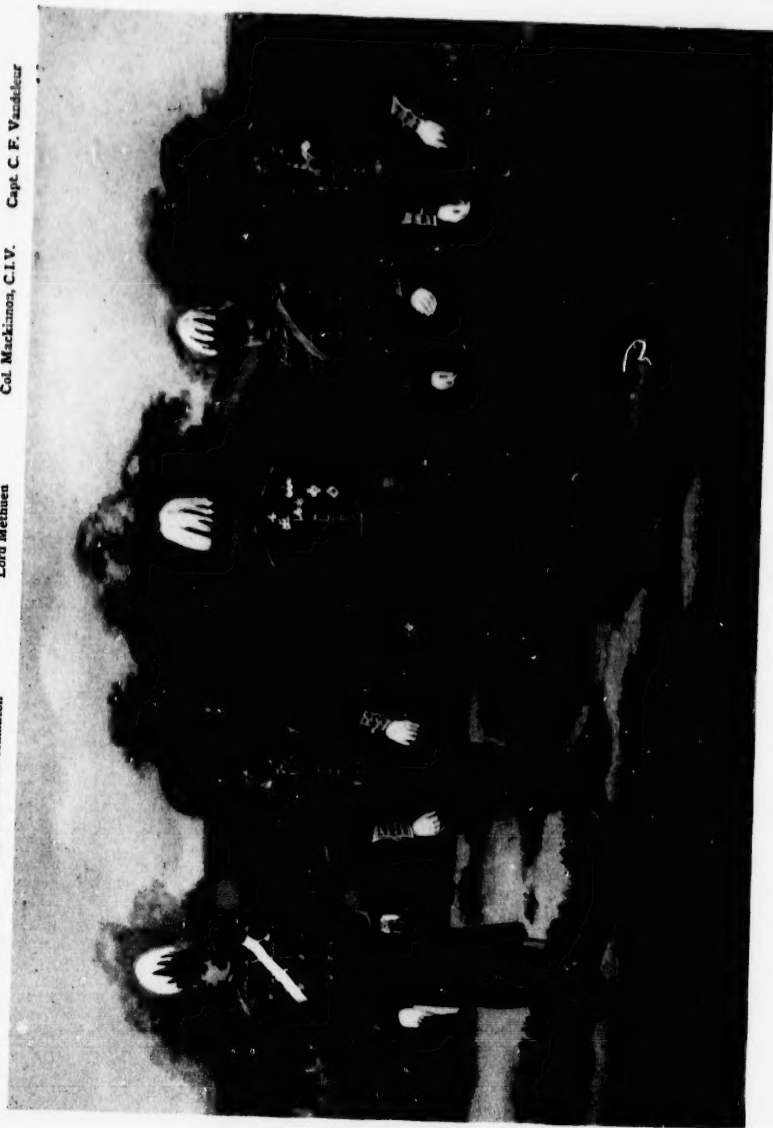
Maj. F. S. Maude

Maj. Hon. A. H. Hamilton

Lord Methuen

Col. Mackinnon, C.I.V.

Capt. C. F. Vandeleur



**GENERAL AND STAFF**

Photo by Goupier & Co., London

4-69.

# SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

BY

LOUIS CRESWICKE

AUTHOR OF "ROXANE," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. V.—FROM THE DISASTER AT KOORN SPRUIT TO  
LORD ROBERTS'S ENTRY INTO PRETORIA

EDINBURGH: T. C. & E. C. JACK

TORONTO: THE PUBLISHERS' SYNDICATE, LTD., 88-90 YONGE STREET

GENERAL AND STAFF

Printed by George & Co., London

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Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
At the Ballantyne Press

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### MARCH 1900.

- 31.—Loss of British convoy and seven guns at Koom Spruit.

### APRIL 1900.

- 4.—Capture of British troops by the Boers near Reddersburg.  
 5.—General Villebois killed near Boshop, and party of Boer mercenaries captured by Lord Methuen. General Clements received the submission of 4000 rebels. British occupation of Reddersburg.  
 7.—Skirmish near Warrenton.  
 9.—Colonial Division attacked at Weperner.  
 11.—General Chermiside promoted to command Third Division, vice General Gatacre, ordered home.  
 20.—Boer positions attacked at Dewetsdorp.  
 23.—General Carrington arrived at Beira.  
 25.—Wepener siege raised. General Chermiside occupied Dewetsdorp. Bloemfontein Waterworks recaptured.  
 26.—Sir C. Warren appointed Governor of Griqualand West.  
 27.—Thabanchu occupied.  
 28.—Fighting near Thabanchu Mountain.

### MAY 1900.

- 1.—General Hamilton captured Houtnek.  
 5.—British occupation of Brandfort. Lord Roberts's further advance to the Vet River.

- 6.—The Vet River passed and Smaldeel occupied.  
 7.—General Hunter occupied Fourteen Streams.  
 8.—Ladybrand deserted by the Boers.  
 9.—Capture of Welgelegen. Mafeking Relief Force reached Vryburg.  
 10.—Battle of Zand River. Occupation of Ventersburg.  
 12.—Lord Roberts occupied Kroonstad without resistance. Commandant Eloff attacked Mafeking, and was captured by Col. Baden-Powell.  
 13.—General Buller advanced towards the Biggarsberg.  
 14.—Occupation of Dundee.  
 15.—Occupation of Glencoe. Mafeking Relief Force defeated the Boers at Kraaipan.  
 16.—Christiana occupied.  
 17.—General Ian Hamilton occupied Lindley. Colonel Mahon, at the head of the relief force, entered Mafeking. Lord Methuen entered Hoopstad.  
 18.—Occupation of Newcastle.  
 20.—Colonel Bethune's Mounted Infantry ambushed near Vryheid.  
 22.—General Ian Hamilton occupied Heilbron after a series of engagements. The main army, under Lord Roberts, pitched its tents at Honing Spruit, and General French crossed the Rhenoster to the north-west of the latter place.  
 23.—Rhenoster position turned.  
 24.—British Army entered the Transvaal, crossing the Vaal near Parys, unopposed.  
 27.—The passage of the Vaal was completed by the British Army.



## The Transvaal War

28.—Orange Free State formally annexed under the title of Orange River Colony.

The Battle of Biddulph's Berg.

29.—Battle of Doornkop: Boers defeated.

Lord Roberts arrived at Germiston.

Kruger fled his capital at midnight amid the lamentations of the populace.

30.—Occupation of Utrecht by General Hildyard.

Sir Charles Warren defeated the enemy near Douglas.

31.—Battalion of Irish Yeomanry captured at Lindley.

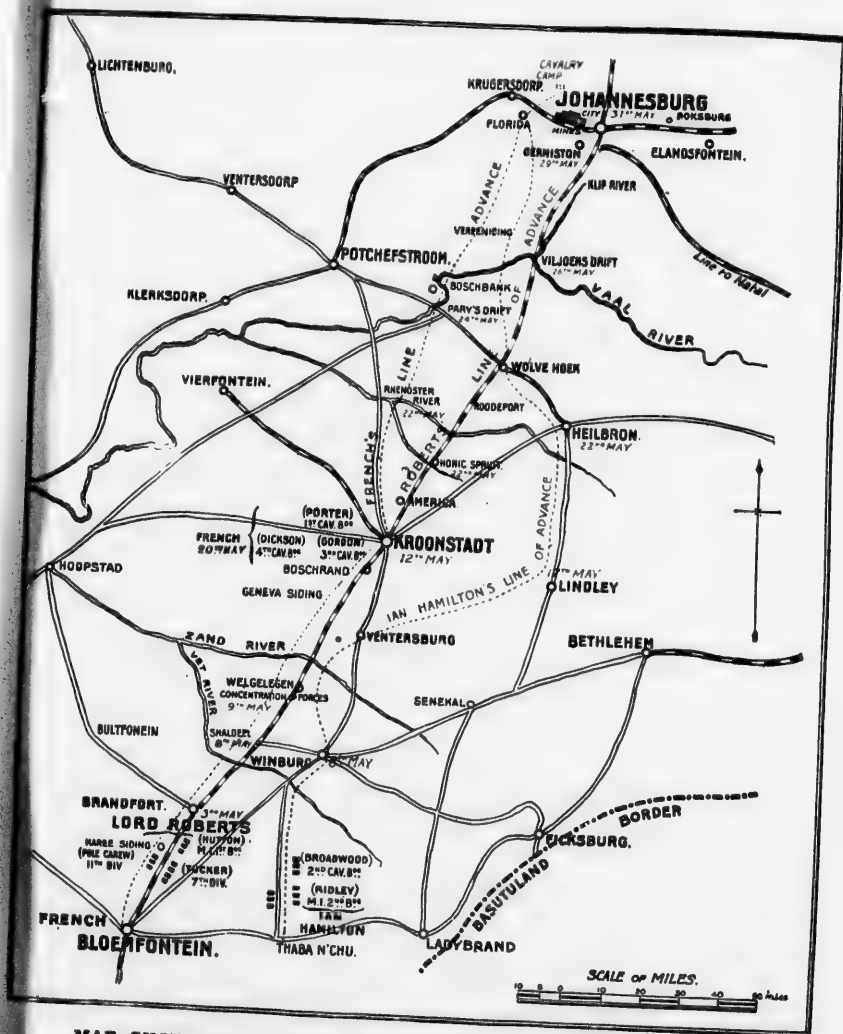
The British flag hoisted at Johannesburg.

JUNE 1900.

5.—The British flag hoisted in Pretoria.



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MAP SHOWING THE LINES OF ADVANCE FROM BLOEMFONTEIN TO PRETORIA.

(The Rand District and the Movements around Pretoria are shown on Map at p. 186.)

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# SOUTH AFRICA AND THE TRANSVAAL WAR

## CHAPTER I

### THE IMMORTAL HANDFUL<sup>1</sup>

MAFEKING, 18TH MAY 1900

Shout for the desperate host,  
Handful of Britain's race,  
Holding the lonely post  
Under God's grace;  
Guarding our England's fame  
Over the open grave,  
Shielding the Flag from shame—  
Shout for the brave!

Ringed by a ruthless foe  
Dared they the night attack,  
Answered him blow for blow,  
Hurling him back;  
Cheering, the charge was pressed,  
More than they held they hold,  
Won bayonet at the breast—  
Shout for the bold!

Long, long the days and nights;  
Bitter the tales that came,  
What of the distant fights?  
Rumours of shame?  
Scorning the doubts that swell,  
Nursing the hope anew,  
They did their duty well—  
Shout for the true!

Shout for the glory won,  
Empire of East and West!  
Shout for each valiant son  
Nursed at thy breast!  
Fear could not find them out,  
Death stalked there iron-shod,  
Help found them Victors—shout  
Praises to God!

—HAROLD BEGBIE.

### DISASTER AT KOORN SPRUIT

THE last volume closed with an account of Colonel Plumer's desperate effort to relieve Mafeking on the 31st of March. On that unlucky day events of a tragic, if heroical, nature were taking place elsewhere. These have now to be chronicled. On the 18th of March a force was moved out under the command of Colonel Broadwood to the east of Bloemfontein. The troops were sent to garrison Thabanchu, to issue proclamations, and to contribute to the pacification of the outlying districts. They were also to secure a valuable consignment of flour from the Leeuw Mills. The enemy was prowling about, and two commandos hovered

<sup>1</sup> From "The Handy Man, and other Verses" (Grant Richards).

## The Transvaal War

north of the small detached post at the mills. Reinforcements were prayed for, and a strong patrol was sent off for the protection of the post, or to cover its withdrawal in the event of attack. Meanwhile the enemy was "lying low," as the phrase is. Whereupon Colonel Pilcher pushed on, to Ladybrand, made a prisoner of the Llanddrost, but, hearing of the advance of an overwhelming number of the foe, retired with all promptness to Thabanchu. The Boers, with the mobility characteristic of them, were gathering together their numbers, determining if possible to prevent any onward move of the forces, and bent at all costs on securing for their own comfort and convenience the southern corner of the Free State, whence the provender and forage of the future might be expected to come. Without this portion of the grain country to fall back on, they knew their activities would be crippled indeed.

In consequence, therefore, of the close proximity of these Federal hordes, Colonel Broadwood made an application to head-quarters for reinforcements, and decided to remove from Thabanchu. On Friday the 30th he marched to Bloemfontein Waterworks, south of the Modder. His force consisted of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (10th Hussars and the composite regiment of Household Cavalry), "Q," "T," and "U" Batteries R.H.A. (formed into two six-gun batteries, "Q" and "U"), Rimington's Scouts, Roberts's Horse, Queensland and Burma Mounted Infantry. The baggage crossed the river, and outspanned the same evening. On the following morning at 2 A.M. the force, having fought a rearguard action throughout the night, arrived in safety at Sanna's Post. Here for a short time they bivouacked, and here for a moment let us leave them.

At this time a mounted infantry patrol was scouring the country. They were seen by some Boers who were scuttling across country from the Ladybrand region, and these promptly hid in a convenient spruit, whence, in the time that remained to them, they planned the ambush that was so disastrous to our forces and so exhilarating to themselves. There are differences of opinion regarding this story. Some believe that the ambush was planned earlier by a skilful arrangement in concert with the Boer hordes—the hornets of Ladybrand, whose nest had been disturbed by the invasion of Colonel Pilcher—who owed Colonel Broadwood a debt. They declare that the hiding-place was carefully sought out, so that those sheltered therein should, on a given signal from De Wet, act in accord with others of their tribe, and blockade the passage of the British, who were known—everything was known—to be returning to Bloemfontein.

According to Boer reports, the plans for the cutting off and surrounding of Colonel Broadwood were carefully made out, but only at the last moment, and if, for once, Boer reports can be believed, the successful scheme may be looked upon as one of the finest pieces of



## The Transvaal War

horse batteries were got under way, while the mounted infantry sprayed out to screen the retreat. All this time shells continued to burst and bang with alarming persistency. They came from across the river, and consequently it was imagined that every mile gained brought the convoy nearer to Bloemfontein and farther from the enemy. They had some twenty miles to go. Still, the officers who had charge of the party believed the coast to be clear. After moving on about a mile they approached a deep spruit—a branch of the Modder, more morass than stream. It was there that De Wet and his smart 400 had artfully concealed themselves.

The spruit offered every facility for the formation of an ingenious trap. The ground rose on one side toward a grassy knoll, on the slopes of which was a stony cave from which a hidden foe could command the drifts. So admirably concealed was this enclosure and all that it enclosed, that the leading scouts passed over the drift without suspecting the presence of the enemy. These latter, true to their talent of slimness, made no sign till waggons and guns had safely entered the drift, and were, so to speak, inextricably in their clutches.

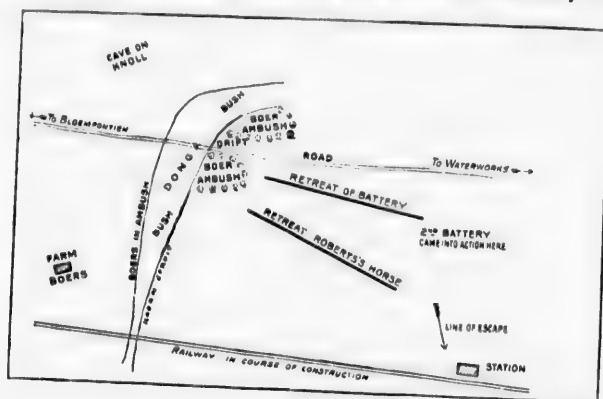
Their manœuvre was entirely successful. Some one said the waggons were driven into the drift exactly as partridges are driven to the gun. Another gave a version of very much the same kind. He said, "It was just like walking into a cloak-room—the Boers politely took your rifle and asked you kindly to step on one side, and there was nothing else you could do!"

The nicety of the situation from the Boer point of view was described by a correspondent of *The Times*:—

"The camp was about three miles from the drift, which lay in the point of a rough angle made by an embankment under construction and the bush-grown sluit which converged towards it. Thus when the Boers were in position, lining the sluit and the embankment, the position became like the base of a horse's foot. The Boers were the metal shoe, our own troops the frog. At the point where the drift cuts the sluit the nullah is broad and extensive. The Boers stationed at this spot realised that the baggage was moving without an advanced guard. They were equal to the situation. As each waggon dropped below the sky-line into the drift the teamsters were directed to take their teams to right or left as the case might be, and the guards were disarmed under threat of violence. No shot was fired. Each waggon in turn was captured and placed along the sluit, so that those in rear had no knowledge of what was taking place to their front until it became their turn to surrender. To all intents and purposes the convoy was proceeding forward. The scrub and high ground beyond the drift was sufficient to mask the clever contrivance of the enemy. Thus all the waggons except nine passed into the hands of the enemy."

## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

The waggons, numbering some hundred, had no sooner descended to the spruit and got bogged there than, from all sides sprung up as from the earth, Boers with rifles at the present, shouting—"Hands up. Give up your bandoliers." A scene of appalling confusion followed. Some cocked their revolvers. Others were weaponless. So unsuspecting of danger had they been that their rifles, for comfort's sake, had been stowed on the waggons, the better to allow of freedom to assist in other operations of transport. Some men of the baggage guard shouldered their rifles; others, from under the medley of waggons, still strove ineffectually to show



PLAN—DISASTER AT KOORN SPRUIT.

fight. The Boers were unavoidably in the ascendant. The hour and the opportunity were theirs.

At this time up came U Battery, with Roberts's Horse on their left. The battery was surrounded, armed Boers roared—"You must surrender!" and then, sharp and clear, the first shot rang through the air. This was said to have been fired by Sergeant Green, Army Service Corps, who, refusing to surrender, had shot his antagonist, and had instantly fallen victim to his grand temerity. The drivers of the batteries were ordered to dismount, but as gunners don't dismount gracefully to order of the foe, the tragedy pursued its course. Major Taylor, commanding the battery, however, succeeded in galloping off to warn the officer commanding Q Battery of the catastrophe. Meanwhile, in that serene and pastoral spruit reigned fire and fury and the clash of frenzied men. Down went a horse—another, another. Then man after man—groaning and reeling in their agony. Many in the spruit lay dead. At this



## The Transvaal War

time the troop of Roberts's Horse had appeared on the scene, and were called on to surrender. Realising the disaster, they wheeled about, and galloped to report and bring assistance. This was the signal for more volleys from the enemy in the spruit, and the horse-men thus sped between two fires—that of the Mausers below them and of the shells which had continued to harry the troops. Nevertheless the gallant fellows rode furiously for dear life on their journey. Men dropped from their saddles like ripe fruit from a shaken tree. Still they sped on. They must bring help at any price. Meanwhile the scene in the spruit was one of horror, for the Boers were sweeping every nook and corner with their Mausers. Cascades of fire played on the unfortunate mass therein entangled, on waggons overturned and squealing mules, on guns and horses hopelessly heaped together, on men and oxen sweating and plunging in death-agony. The heaving, struggling, horrific picture was too grievous for description. Only a part of their terrible experience was known by even the actors themselves. Luckily, a merciful Providence allows each human intelligence to gauge only a certain amount of the awful in tragic experience. There are some who told of wounded men lying blood-bathed and helpless beneath baggage that weighed like the stone of Sisyphus; of horses that uttered weird screams of agonised despair, which petrified the veins of hearers and sent the current of blood to their hearts; of oxen and mules that stamped and kicked, dealing ugly wounds, so that those who might have crawled out from under them could crawl no more. Some guns were overturned—a hopeless bulk of iron, that resisted all efforts at removal; others, bereft of their drivers, were dragged wildly into space by maddened teams, whose happy instinct had caused them to stampede. Seeing the disaster, they had pulled out to left and struggled to get back to camp, yet even as they struggled they were disabled and thus left at the mercy of the foe.

Major Burnham, the famous scout, who having been taken a prisoner earlier and at this juncture remained powerless in the hands of the Boers, thus described the terrible sight which he was forced to witness:—

“One of the batteries (Q), which was upon the outside of the three-banked rows of waggons, halted at the spruit, dashed off, following Roberts's Horse to the rear and south. Yet most of them got clear, although horses and men fell at every step, and the guns were being dragged off with only part of their teams, animals falling wounded by the way. Then I saw the battery, when but 1200 yards from the spruit, wheel round into firing position, unlimber, and go into action at that range, so as to save comrades and waggons from capture. Who gave the order for that deed of self-sacrifice I don't know. It may have been a sergeant or lieutenant,

## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

for their commanding officer had been left behind at the time. One of the guns upset in wheeling, caused by the downfall of wounded horses. There it lay afterwards, whilst three steeds for a long time fought madly to free themselves from the traces and the presence of their dead stable companions."

Those of the unfortunate men who were uninjured struggled grandly to save the guns, to drag them free from the scene of destruction, but several of the guns whose teams were shot fell into the hands of the enemy. Some gallant fellows of Rimington's Scouts made a superb effort to rush through the fire of the Federal's and save them, but five guns only were rescued. These were all guns of Q Battery, which, when the first alarm was given, were within 300 yards of the spruit. When the officer who commanded the battery strove to wheel about, though the Boers took up a second position and poured a heavy fire on the galloping teams, a wheel horse was shot, over went a gun, more beasts dropped, a waggon was rendered useless, but still the teams that remained were galloped through the confusion to the shelter of some tin buildings, part of an unfinished railway station, some 1150 yards from the disastrous scene. Here a new era began. Much to the amazement of the Boers, the guns came into action, and continued, in the face of horrible carnage, to make heroic efforts at retaliation, the officers themselves assisting in serving the guns till ordered to retire. At this time Q Battery was assailed by a terrific cross fire, and gradually the numbers of the gunners and horses became thinned, till the ground, covered with riderless steeds and dismounted and disabled men, presented a picture of writhing agony and stern heroism that has seldom been equalled. But the splendid effort had grand results.

No sooner were the British guns in action than the whole force rallied: the situation was saved. The Household Cavalry and the 10th Hussars were off in one direction, Rimington's Scouts and the mounted infantry in another, making for some rising ground on the left where their position would be defensible and a line of retreat found. Meanwhile Q Battery from six till noon pounded away at the Dutchmen, while Lieutenant Chester-Master, K.R.R., found a passage farther down the spruit unoccupied by the enemy, by which it was possible to effect a crossing. Major Burnham's account of the artillery duelling at this time is inspiring:—

"As soon as the gunners manning the five guns opened with shrapnel, the Boers hiding in Koorn Spruit slackened their fire, preferring to keep under cover as much as possible. In that way many others escaped. The mounted infantry deployed and engaged the Boer gunners and skirmishers to the east, and the cavalry with Roberts's Horse dismounted and rallied to cover the guns from the fire. A small body was also despatched to strike south and fight north. My captors directed their attention to Q Battery. They got the range,

## The Transvaal War

1700 yards, by one of the Boers firing at contiguous bare ground, until he saw by the dust puffs he had got the distance, whereupon he gave the others the exact range, which they at once adopted. The gunners gave us nearly forty-eight shrapnel, for they were firing very rapidly, but although they had the range of our kraal, they only managed to kill one horse. I noticed that the Boers, though they dodged and took every advantage of cover, fired most carefully, and yet rapidly. It was the same with those in the spruit as inside the kraal where I sat. That day the Boers said to me they had but three men killed in the spruit, and only a half-dozen or so wounded. Those artillerymen, how I admired and felt proud of them! and the Boers, too, were astonished at their courage and endurance. Fired at from three sides, they never betrayed the least alarm or haste, but coolly laid their guns and went through their drill as if it had been a sham-fight, and men and horses were not dropping on all sides. There was a little bit of cover a hundred yards or so behind the battery, around the siding and station buildings of the projected railway and embankment. Thither the living horses from the limbers and guns were taken, and the wounded were conveyed. When, three hours later, their ammunition for the 12-pounders was scarce, and the Boer rifle fire from the gulch, the waggons, and ridge opened heavy and deadly, the gunners would crawl back and forward for powder and shell. Had it not been for those terrible cannon, the Boers told me that they would have charged, closing in on all sides upon Broadwood's men."

When the order to retire was received, Major Phipps Hornby ordered the guns and their limbers to be run back by hand to where the teams of uninjured horses stood behind the station buildings. Then such gunners as remained, assisted by the officers and men of the Burma Mounted Infantry, and directed by Major Phipps Hornby and Captain Humphreys (the sole remaining officers of the battery), succeeded in running back four of the guns under shelter. It is said the guns would never have been saved but for the gallant action of the officers and men of the Burma Mounted Infantry, who, when nearly every gunner was killed, volunteered, and succeeded, under the heaviest fire, in dragging the guns back by hand to a place of safety. It was while doing this that Lieutenant P. C. Grover, of the Burma Mounted Infantry, was killed. Though one or two of the limbers were thus valiantly withdrawn under a perfect cyclone of shot and shell, the exhausted men found it impossible to drag in the remaining limbers or the fifth gun. Human beings failing, the horses had also to be risked, and presently several gallant drivers volunteered to plunge straight into the hellish vortex. They got to work grandly, though horses dropped in death agony and man after man, hero after hero, was picked off by the unerring and copious fire of the Dutchmen. It is difficult to get the names of all the glorious fellows who carried their lives in their hands on that great but dreadful day, but Gunner Lodge and Driver Glasock were chosen as the representatives of those who immortalised themselves and earned the Victoria Cross. Of

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THE DISASTER AT KOORNSPRUIT: DRIVERLESS TEAMS STAMPEDING

Drawing by John Charlton

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## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

Bombardier Gudgeon's magnificent energy enough cannot be said. One after another teams were shot, but he persisted in his work of getting fresh teams. Three times he strove to roll a gun to a place of safety, and on the third occasion was wounded. The splendid discipline of the gunners was extolled by every eye-witness, and the way the noble fellows, surrounded with Boer sharpshooters, stood to the guns was so marvellous, so inspiring, that even the men who were covering the retirement, at risk of their lives were impelled to rise and cheer the splendid action of the glorious remnant. The correspondent of *The Times* declared that "When the order came for the guns to retire, ten men and one officer alone remained upon their feet, and they were not all unwounded. The teams were as shattered as the gun groups. Solitary drivers brought up teams of four—in one case a solitary pair of wheelers was all that could be found to take a piece away. The last gun was dragged away by hand until a team could be patched up from the horses that remained. As the mutilated remnant of two batteries of Horse Artillery tottered through the line of prone mounted infantry covering its withdrawal, the men could not restrain their admiration. Though it was to court death to show a hand, men leaped to their feet and cheered the gunners as they passed. Seven guns and a baggage train were lost, but the prestige and honour of the country were saved. Five guns had been extricated. The mounted infantry had found a line of retreat, and total disaster was avoided. But the fighting was not over. The extrication of a rearguard in the front of a victorious and exultant enemy has been a difficult and a delicate task in the history of all war. In the face of modern weapons it is fraught with increased difficulties. For two hours Rimington's Scouts, the New Zealand Mounted Infantry, Roberts's Horse, and the 3rd Regiment of Mounted Infantry covered each other in retreat, while the enemy galloped forward and, dismounting, engaged them, often at ranges up to 300 yards."

The force was surrounded by the enemy on all sides, and there was no resource but to fight through—the cavalry and mounted infantry taking a line towards a drift on the south. Roberts's Horse made a gallant and desperate effort to outflank the Dutchmen, and lost heavily; and Aldersen's Brigade, with magnificent dash and considerable skill, succeeded in holding back the hostile horde. This retirement was no easy matter, for the position taken up by the Federals was exceptionally favourable to them. To the north the spruit twisted in a convenient hoop, which sheltered them; to the south was the embankment of the railway in course of construction; from these points and from front and rear the enemy was able, in comparative security, to batter and harass the discomfited troops.

Fortunately, in the end, Colville's Division, which had been

## The Transvaal War

making its way from Bloemfontein, arrived in time to check the Boers in their jubilant advance, though some hours too late to prevent the enemy from capturing and removing the waggons and guns.

While the retreat was being effected more valorous work was going on elsewhere. The members of the Army Medical Corps, with the coolness peculiar to them, were exposing themselves and rushing to the assistance of the wounded, many being stricken down in the midst of their splendid labours. Roberts's Horse made themselves worthy of the noble soldier who godfathered them, and one—a trooper of the name of Tod—a prodigy of valour, rode deliberately into the *mêlée* in search of the wounded, and returned with the dead weight of a helpless man in his arms, under the fierce fire of the foe. If disaster does nothing more, it breeds heroes. The melancholy affair of Koorn Spruit brought to light the superb qualities that lie dormant in many who live their lives in the matter of fact way and give no sign.

Splendid actions followed one another with amazing persistence, man after man and officer after officer attempting deeds of daring, each of which in themselves would form the foundation of an heroic tale. Lieutenant Maxwell of Roberts's Horse, from the very teeth of the enemy dragged off a wounded man—a lad who, by the time he was rescued, had fainted. But the young subaltern promptly got him in the saddle, and the pair sped forth from the fiery zone alive. The Duke of Teck also rushed to the succour of Lieutenant Meade, who was wounded (a bullet cutting off his finger and piercing his thigh), gave up to him his horse and removed him from the scene of danger. At the same time Colonel Pilcher was gallantly rescuing Corporal Packer of the 1st Life Guards. Major Booth (Northumberland Fusiliers) lost his life through doggedly holding a position with four others, in order to cover the retreat.

When the Queenslanders arrived they too showed the stuff they were made of, the best British thews combined with the doughtiest British hearts. They plunged into action—so dashing indeed that the Boers very nearly mopped them up. But Colonel Henry was equal even to the skittish foe, and contrived to entertain the Dutchmen by leading them so active a dance that eventually the Colonials were able to fight out their own salvation.

At last the guns got away and followed the line of retreat taken by the cavalry. The troops then conducted their retirement by alternate companies, each company taking up its duties without fluster, and covering the other company's retirement with great steadiness until they reached Bushman's Kop. The marvellous coolness of the force was particularly amazing, as every man, with the Boers still at his heels, believed himself to be cut off, yet in spite of

## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

this belief showed no signs of concern. In one regiment, consisting of 11 officers and 200 men, two officers were killed, four wounded, and sixty-six men killed and wounded.

Strange scenes took place during those awful hours in the donga, and wonderful escapes were made. One trooper was seized on by a Boer. "Surrender," cried the Dutchman, but before another word could be uttered, the trooper's sabre whistled from its sheath and the Boer was dead. Another who was wounded got off, as he said, "by the skin of his teeth." He had become jammed under a waggon in company with a Boer—who had crept there for cover—and the hindquarters of a dying mule. Over the cart poured a rattling rain of bullets, to which he longed to respond. The Boer, believing the wounded man to be his prisoner, made himself known. "Hot work this," he said. The next instant the Boer was caught by the throat and knocked insensible, while the Briton promptly extricated himself and vanished from the seething, fighting mass. Another of the Household Cavalry, when summoned to surrender his rifle, threw it with such force at the head of his would-be captor that he was able to make good his escape.

The following interesting account was given from the point of view of an officer of the Life Guards who was present:—

"We heard firing at 6.30, and while we were saddling bang came two shells a little short, followed by three others. The firing went on for half-an-hour incessantly. The convoys got under way very quickly, followed by Mounted Infantry and Life Guards. Luckily only two shells burst, and only one mule was killed. We moved on to the spruit and were shot at by Mausers from our right flank. The convoys were on the brink of the drift. Some of the waggons were actually crossing, and our artillery close on to them, when a terrific fire came from the spruit. The U Battery was captured—the men and officers being killed, wounded, or prisoners. We went about and retired in good order in a hail of shot, being within 120 yards of the enemy. It is wonderful how we escaped. Two of our men were shot—one in the thigh and the other in the shoulder—and we had altogether 32 missing. Our leading horses and baggage were within nine feet of the fire; yet many of them got off, including my servant and horse. I lost, however, my saddlebags, with change of clothes, trousers, shoes, iron kettle, and letters which I grudge the Boers reading. We got out of fire and lined the river banks, firing shots at the Boers, who were, however, too distant. We were well hid in a position like what the Boers had held themselves, and we hoped to enfilade them, but the river twisted too much, and it is impossible to locate fire with smokeless powder. We then followed the 10th Hussars for four miles towards Bushman's Kopje. The Ninth Division



## The Transvaal War

Infantry, under Colvile, came over the ridge with eighteen guns, and we heard a lot of heavy firing."

He went on to say: "Why we are alive I can't say. Many of the bullets were explosive, as I heard them burst when they hit the ground. The shelling was most trying, as we had to stand quite still for twenty minutes a living target."

A laughing philosopher, a Democritus of the nineteenth century, gave to the world, *via* the *Pall Mall Gazette*, his curious experiences. Among other things he said:—

"Roberts's Horse was ordered to trot off to the right of the convoy. 'Oh! those are our men, you fool,' said everybody. Two men came up to the Colonel. 'We've got you surrounded, you'd better surrender,' say they; and heads popped up in the grass forty yards from us. Boers appeared all along the ridge a hundred yards ahead. 'Files about, gallop!' yells the adjutant. (They dropped him immediately.)

"I was carrying a fence-post to cook the breakfast of my section (of four men). I turned my horse; there came a crackling in the air, on the ground, everywhere; the whole world was crackling, a noise as of thorns crackling or the cracks of a heavy whip. My gee-gee (usually slow) went well, stimulated by the horses round it, and actually took a water-jump; I had to hold my helmet on with my right hand, which still held the fence-post, and I thought my knuckles would surely get grazed by a bullet. They were pouring in a cross-fire now as well, and once or twice I heard the *s-s-s-s* of the Mauser bullet (the crackle is explosives, you know). It was very exhilarating; the gallop and the fire made me shout and sing and whistle. I jumped a dead man, and almost immediately caught up B., who is one of my section.

"The fire was slackening, and we were half a mile away by then, and we looked round to see whether anybody was forming up. The plain was dotted with men and many riderless horses. Everybody was yelling, 'When do we form up?' You feel rather foolish when running away. At about one mile we formed up again. From the rear, and from the place we had come from, and from the river bed, there came a noise as of thousands of shipwrights hammering. Nine (?) of our guns were captured; the remaining three fired at intervals. My squadron was sent into a depression on the left of the New Zealanders. Here we dismounted (No. 3 of each section holding the horses), and went up as a firing line, range 1200, 1400, and 1600 yards. The General passed. 'Ever been in such a warm corner?' says he to the bugler. 'Oh yes,' says the little chap, quite cheerfully and untruthfully. The General remarked, laughing, that *he* hadn't. I felt sorry for him, and heard the news-boys shouting, 'Another British disaster!' and the Continental

## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

papers, 'Nouvelle défaite des Anglais! Yah!' It was the greatest fun out, barring the loss of the guns and men. For we were not losing a situation of strategic importance or anything of that kind. The Boers had collared our blankets and things, but we chuckled at the thought of what they would suffer if they ever slept in 'em."

Sergeant-Major Martin, who, with Major Taylor (commanding U Battery), was incidental in warning Colonel Rochfort and Major Phipps Hornby of their danger, and thus assisting to save Q Battery, described his experiences:—

"A Boer commander stepped out and confronted the Major with fixed bayonet; all his (the Boer's) men stood up in the spruit ready to shoot us down if we had attempted to fight, ordered the Major to surrender, and also the battery. The battery had no chance whatever to do anything. As the trap was laid, so we fell into it. Now, as the Major was talking to the Boer commander, I turned my horse round (I was then three yards from him) and walked quietly to the rear of our battery. When I got there, putting spurs to my horse, I galloped for all I was worth to tell the Colonel to stop the other battery, as U Battery were all prisoners. I then looked towards the battery; the Boers were busy disarming them. I went a little distance in that direction to have a last look. By this time the Household Cavalry had come up, and the 14th Hussars; they halted, soon found out what had happened, and turned round to retire. As they did so the Boers opened fire on us. The bullets came like hailstones. It was a terrible sight. One gun and its team of horses galloped away; by some means or other it was pulled up. I took possession of it, still under this heavy fire, and, finding one of our drivers, I put him in the wheel, and drove the leaders myself. We had between us 14 horses. I drove in the lead for about six miles, following the cavalry, who had gone on to see if we could get through. Eventually, after several hours, I got into safe quarters."

The list of loss was terrible:—

Brevet-Major A. W. C. Booth, Northumberland Fusiliers; Lieutenant P. Crowle, Roberts's Horse; Lieutenant Irvine, Army Medical Service (attached to Royal Horse Artillery), were killed. Among the wounded were: Brevet-Colonel A. N. Rochfort, Royal Horse Artillery, Staff. Q Battery Royal Horse Artillery.—Captain G. Humphreys, Lieutenant E. B. Ashmore, Lieutenant H. R. Peck, Lieutenant D. J. Murch, Lieutenant J. K. Walch, Tasmanian Artillery (attached). Royal Horse Guards.—Lieutenant the Hon. A. V. Meade, Roberts's Horse.—Major A. W. Pack Beresford, Captain Carrington Smith, Lieutenant H. A. A. Darley, Lieutenant W. H. M. Kirkwood. Mounted Infantry.—Major D. T. Cruickshank, 2nd Essex Regiment; Lieutenant F. Russell-Brown, Royal Munster Fusiliers; Lieutenant P. C. Grover, Shropshire Light Infantry (since dead); Lieutenant H. C. Hall, Northumberland Fusiliers. *Wounded and Missing*.—Captain P. D. Dray, Lieutenant and Quartermaster Hawkins. *Missing*.—Lieutenant H. R. Horne. Royal Horse Artillery.—

## The Transvaal War

Captain H. Rouse, Lieutenant G. H. A. White, Lieutenant F. H. G. Stanton, Lieutenant F. L. C. Livingstone-Learmonth. 1st Northumberland Fusiliers.— Lieutenant H. S. Toppin. 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.— Lieutenant H. T. Cantan. 1st Yorkshire Light Infantry.—Captain G. G. Ottey. Royal West Kent Regiment.—Lieutenant R. J. T. Hildyard. Captain Wray, Royal Horse Artillery, Staff; Captain Dray, Roberts's Horse; Lieutenant the Hon. D. R. H. Anderson-Pelham, 10th Hussars; Lieutenant C. W. H. Crichton, 10th Hussars.

The casualties all told numbered some 350, including 200 missing. Reports differ regarding the strength of the enemy. Lord Roberts estimated it at 8000 to 10,000, while De Wet declared he had only about 1400 men.

All that remained of U Battery was one gun, Major Taylor, a sergeant-major, a shoeing-smith, and a driver!

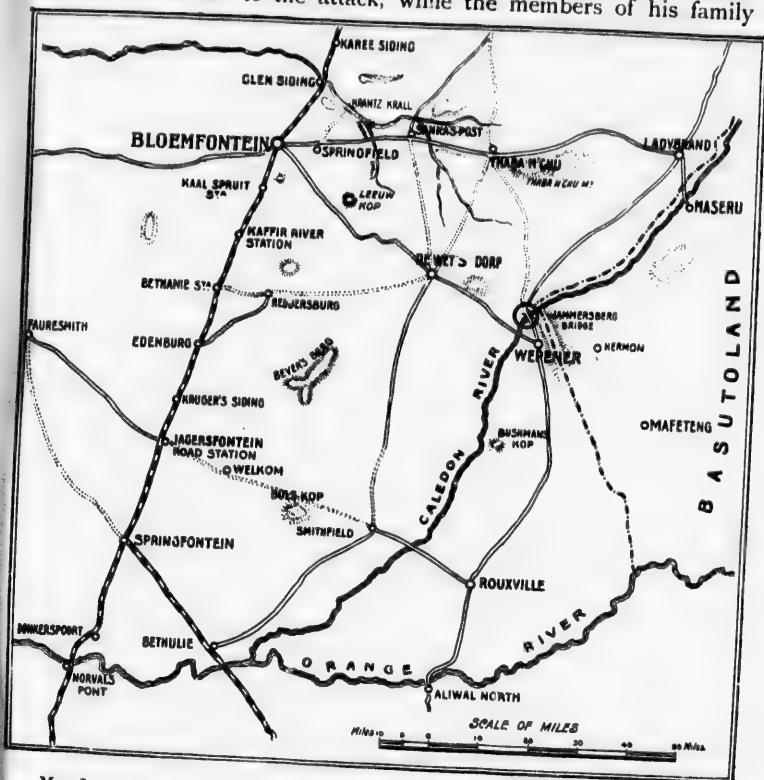
In Q Battery, Captain Humphreys, Lieutenants Peck, Ashmore, Murch were wounded, and the latter two reported missing.

The whole of the grievous Saturday afternoon was spent by the gallant doctors in tending the ninety or more of our brave wounded who lay helpless in the spruit. They were carried to the shelter of the tin houses, and the work of bandaging and extracting bullets was pursued without a moment's relaxation. The removal of the sufferers from the neighbourhood of the spruit on the day following was a sore task, and the sight that presented itself to the ambulance party was one which was too shocking to be ever forgotten. In the spruit itself the wreckage of waggons which had been looted by the Boers covered most of the scene, and, interspersed with them were horses and cattle, maimed, mutilated, and dead. With these, in ghastly companionship, were the bodies of slain soldiers and black waggon-drivers. The living wounded were conveyed from the disastrous vicinity in ambulances and waggons brought for them under the covering fire of the guns, which swept the length of the river and deterred the enemy from attempting to block the passage of the melancholy party. The Republicans, however, fired viciously from adjacent kopjes, but without disturbing the progress of the operations.

At noon General French's cavalry, with Wavell's Brigade, had left Bloemfontein to occupy a position on the Modder between Glen and Sanna's Post, and keep an eye on further encroachments of the Boers. The enemy, on the fatal Saturday night, had destroyed the waterworks, thus forcing the inhabitants of Bloemfontein to fall back on some insanitary wells, as a substitute for which the waterworks had been erected. Here, on their departure for Ladybrand, they left 12 officers and 70 men, who had been wounded in the fray, and whom they doubtless considered might be an encumbrance to their future movements. These were conveyed by ambulance to Bloemfontein.

## Disaster at Koorn Spruit

As an instance of Boer treachery, it was stated that the Free State commandant Pretorius, whose farm overlooked the spruit wherein the ambushade was arranged, had given up arms and taken the oath to retire to his farm. Yet on the day of the disaster he led the Boers to the attack, while the members of his family



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MILITARY OPERATIONS TO THE S. AND E. OF BLOEMFONTEIN.

were prominent among the looters of the wrecked waggons. Other tales of cruelty and ill-treatment and treachery on the part of the Boers were well authenticated. It is useless to repeat them, but the circumstances are merely noted to give an explanation for a change of policy which was necessitated by the actions of the enemy—a change which was, unfortunately, adopted only when many martyrs had been made in the cause of forbearance.

# The Transvaal War

## THE REDDERSBURG MISHAP

The Boers, triumphant with their success at Koorn Spruit, scurried to Dewetsdorp, drove out the British detachment which had been posted there by General Gatacre, and on the 4th of April came in for another piece of luck, for which we had to pay by the loss of three companies of Royal Irish Rifles and two companies of the Northumberland Fusiliers.

The unfortunate occurrence took place near Reddersburg, somewhat to the east of Bethanie Railway Station. A party of infantry, consisting of three companies of Royal Irish Rifles and two companies of the Northumberland Fusiliers, who had been in occupation of Dewetsdorp, and engaged on a pacification mission on the east of the Free State, were ordered on the 3rd to retire to Reddersburg, a place situated some thirty-seven miles from Bloemfontein and fifty miles from Springfontein, where General Gatacre had taken up his head-quarters. In their retirement the troops, it is said, took a somewhat unusual detour, and thus, if they did not court, ran risk of disaster. Anyway, they had travelled about four miles to the east of their destination when, at Mosterts Hok, they were surprised to discover a strong force of some 2500 Boers. They were still more surprised to find that, while they themselves were unaccompanied by artillery, and were possessed of little reserve ammunition, the Dutchmen were provided with three or four formidable guns. Thus, the situation from the first was alarming. Our men, comparatively defenceless, saw themselves hedged in by an overmastering horde. They quickly occupied a position on a peaked hill rising in the centre of ground sliced and seamed with dry nullahs. These popular havens of refuge were at once seized by the Boers and deftly made use of. The Dutchmen, under cover of the dongas, crept cautiously up on all sides of the kopje, surrounding it and pouring cascades of rifle-fire on the small exposed force. In no time the chance of retreat was barred on all sides, and there was no resource but to fight through. But unfortunately, as British ammunition was limited and the Boers warily kept well out of range, all that could be done was to prolong hostilities in the hope that delay would enable reinforcements from Bethanie to come to the rescue. But these did not arrive. The Boers, grasping the situation, gathered courage and approached nearer and nearer. With the dusk coming on and some 2500 of the foe enfilading them from three sides, the British position, as may be imagined, was not a hopeful one. Nevertheless, the Royal Irish Rifles displayed the national spirit of dare-devilry—"fought like bricks," some one said—never losing heart under the persistent attacks of shot and shell that continued till nightfall.

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THE REDDERSBURG MISHAP: MEN OF THE IRISH RIFLES AND MOUNTED INFANTRY  
 DELIVERING UP THEIR ARMS

Facsimile of a Sketch by Melton Prior, War Artist

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## The Reddersburg Mishap

Hoping and waiting and fighting; so passed the dreadful hours of dark. Then, with the dawn, the enemy, flushed with triumph, commenced to pound their prey with redoubled vigour, while our parched and almost ammunitionless troops, in a ghastly quandary, alternately fought and prayed for relief!

Meanwhile the news of the affair having reached Lord Roberts, General Gatacre, on the afternoon of the 3rd, was ordered to proceed from Springfontein to the spot, while the Cameron Highlanders were despatched from Bloemfontein to Bethanie.

General Gatacre, with his main body and an advance guard of mounted infantry under Colonel Sitwell, then marched *via* Edenburg to the succour of the detachment. On the morning of the 4th, Colonel Sitwell having arrived at Bethanie, some fifteen miles from Mosterts Hok, heard sounds of artillery in the distance, and believing that the engagement was going on, prepared to rush to the rescue. But with the small force at his disposal, he deemed it impossible to try a frontal attack, and decided to make an attempt to get round the enemy's right flank. The manoeuvre was unsuccessful, for a party of hidden Boers, from a kopje near the Reddersburg, assailed him and forced him to retire and the rest of the main column should come to his assistance. But by the time General Gatacre had reached the scene (10.30 A.M. on the 4th) the tragedy had been enacted, the curtain had descended on the tragedy. The small and valorous party on Mosterts Hok, which for thirty hours had been fighting and were at last sans water, sans ammunition, sans everything in fact, had been forced to surrender. No sign of them was to be seen. The unfortunate band—many of them the survivors of the fatal exploit at Stormberg—were now on their way to that aristocratical prison-house—the Model School at Pretoria.

General Gatacre, finding further effort useless, then occupied the town of Reddersburg. There, the Boers had hoisted the Free State flag, and were making themselves generally objectionable. Quickly the Boer banner was torn down and the Union Jack run up, though during the operations the General narrowly escaped assassination. He was fired at from a house, but fortunately escaped with only a scratch on the shoulder.

By evening, acting on instructions from Bloemfontein, and owing to the fact that the enemy was massed in all directions and surrounding the town, the force and its prisoners returned to Bethanie, and there encamped to mount guard over the rail. Details regarding the movements of the troops on this grievous day were given by a correspondent, in the *Daily Telegraph*, whose version throws a somewhat depressing light on the sufficiently depressing affair. The writer declared that:—

"A large British force, with a brigade division of artillery



## The Transvaal War

(eighteen guns), on the march to Bloemfontein, was at Bethanie, about eleven miles from Reddersburg, on the night of April 3, and got the news of the above-mentioned infantry being surrounded about 11 P.M. The men immediately saddled up, got under arms, and remained all night ready to move off in relief, but did not receive orders to do so until 8 A.M. on April 4, and then were only permitted to proceed at a walk, constantly halting to water the horses. The result of the delay was that the column arrived just too late, and was then not even allowed to pursue the enemy and release the prisoners, who were dead beat and could not possibly have been hurried along. The relief column was manœuvred outside the town of Reddersburg during most of the day, and then was ordered to return to Bethanie, but, when within a few miles of camp, with the horses and men tired out, a complete change of instructions were issued, and the column was wheeled about and told to march back and take the town of Reddersburg. The Cameron Highlanders, who had just come off a troopship from Egypt, and were, consequently, quite unfit, could hardly move, but all had to turn, for no apparent reason, and march to the ground they had left. The mounted infantry and artillery trotted back and occupied Reddersburg about dusk, with only one casualty, viz. an officer of mounted infantry, and the force bivouacked, with very little food, just outside the town.

"About midnight, the order was given to return to Bethanie again, and the men, who could hardly crawl, were awakened, the march resumed, and Bethanie was reached about 7 A.M. on April 5, after great and unnecessary distress both to men and animals, while no object was gained, the whole expedition being a miserable fiasco, disheartening and humiliating to every one present.

"To whom blame is attributable it is difficult to say, as the officer in command seemed not to have a free hand, but to be directed by wires received at intervals, which must have taken five or six hours to reach him. Either the relief ought never to have been attempted, or it ought to have been carried out expeditiously and with determination."

Mr. Purves, who, as a lance-corporal with one of the Ambulance Corps, was in the thick of the fray, gave a graphic description of the unhappy affair:—

"Reaching Dewetsdorp on the morning of Sunday, April 1st, we first became aware that our progress was being watched by the Boers. Just as we were about to camp outside the dorp, our scouts exchanged a few shots with those of the enemy. Beyond a temporary disarrangement of our plans, nothing happened, as the main body of the enemy did not show at all, and things quieted down till nightfall, when another alarm was caused by the arrival of the Mounted Infantry (Royal Irish Rifles and Northumberland Fusiliers), who were mistaken by our people for Boers, as their arrival was unexpected, and our presence in

## The Reddersburg Mishap

the position occupied by us was a surprise to them. The Mounted Infantry actually dismounted to prepare for business, when fortunately a mutual recognition took place, and a hearty greeting to the brave fellows who were to bear the brunt of the coming action was extended by our force. Captain Casson (one of the first to fall at Mosterts Hock) commanded the new-comers. After a night's rest, we started again on the march, which continued without event till Tuesday, 3rd, when our scouts at 11.30 came back with the news that the enemy were upon us, making for two kopjes in front of us. Both of these were immediately crowned by our little force of 440—the above-mentioned Mounted Infantry, with some of the Royal Irish Rifles taking the northern kopje, and the remainder of the Royal Irish Rifles that to the south. Rifle firing opened at once, and gradually grew hotter till about 2 P.M., when the Boers opened with artillery, four guns being brought into play in positions that enabled them to sweep our two lines. Fortunately, the firing was most erratic, and little or no damage was done by the shells. Volley fire from the Royal Irish Rifles soon put one of the guns out of action. We had no artillery, and the wonder is that we held the position, extended as it was far beyond what seemed tenable to so small a force, for the long time we did. The bearers of C Company, Cape Medical Staff Corps, had a particularly warm time of it. Sent as they were at the commencement of the action right on to the fighting line, they stuck to their posts till the very last without any cover, and only retired with the last line of straggling defenders, who worked their way back through a deadly hail of bullets, explosive and otherwise, to their own camp, after the Boers had won the day. The first day's fight lasted till darkness, when we tried to snatch some rest—a luxury that came to few. Next morning at 5.30 found us sniping at one another prior to the forenoon fire that soon kept every one busy at all points. At 8 the artillery commenced firing, and the fight became fiercer till about 9, when our men on the north kopje, unable to contend against the fearful odds, hoisted the white flag, and the Boers on that side rushed the position, and were thus able to pour a murderous fire into the unfortunate Royal Irish Rifles on the southern height, who, while their attention was riveted on the enemy on their front, were in ignorance of what was going on in their rear for a while. When they turned to reply to the rear attack, their position was taken, and the poor fellows, accompanied by nine of the stretcher-bearers, had to run for the hospital, distant 600 yards, under a fearful cross-fire. Several of the Rifles were killed, but the bearers escaped marvellously. The hospital, which was pitched between the two kopjes, suffered from the shelling, and was in itself dangerous; while, to add to the risk, a trench thrown up to protect the sick was mistaken by the Boers for a rifle-trench, and became a mark for their special attention. One shell burst near the operating-tent while the surgeons were at work on a wounded man, and riddled the tent, fortunately hitting no one. Another banged into a buck waggon. A third cut a mule in halves. A slight bruise on the knee was the only hurt suffered by any of the Hospital Corps. Our dead numbered ten, whom we buried on the battle-field, placing over the grave a neatly dressed and lettered stone, executed by Private Buckland, C Medical Staff Corps. Two of the wounded died afterwards in the temporary hospital at Reddersburg, and are buried in the cemetery there. The wounded, thirty-two in number, were sent down from Bethanie to one of the base hospitals, for treatment in the convalescent stage. Enough praise cannot be given to the warm-hearted people of the Dutch village of Reddersburg. It mattered not that we were British. Their all was placed at our disposal, and to their generosity much of our success with the wounded is to be attributed."

## The Transvaal War

The casualties were as follows :—

*Killed*—Captain F. G. Casson, Northumberland Fusiliers; 2nd Lieut. C. R. Barclay, Northumberland Fusiliers. *Dangerously Wounded*—Captain W. P. Dimsdale, Royal Irish Rifles. *Slightly Wounded*—Lieut. E. C. Bradford, Royal Irish Rifles. *Captured*—Captain Tennant, Royal Artillery; 2nd Lieut. Butler, Durham Light Infantry, attached to Northumberland Fusiliers; Captain W. J. McWhinnie, Royal Irish Rifles; Captain A. C. D. Spencer, Royal Irish Rifles; Captain Kelly, Royal Irish Rifles; 2nd Lieut. E. H. Saunders, Royal Irish Rifles; 2nd Lieut. Bowen-Colthurst, Royal Irish Rifles; 2nd Lieut. Soutry, Royal Irish Rifles, and all remaining rank and file.

Lieut. Stacpole (Northumberland Fusiliers) was also wounded on the 4th. He was riding for reinforcements, and as he approached Reddersburg, unknowing the place was in the hands of the Boers, he was greeted with shots which killed his horse, wounded him, and placed him at the mercy of the enemy, by whom he was captured. The Boers in their retreat, however, left their prisoners behind. The total of killed and wounded numbered between 50 and 150. The strength of the British was 167 mounted infantry, 424 infantry. The enemy were said to be 3200 strong.

The unlucky termination of the affair completed the eastern flanking movement of the Boers, who were now trickling over the country from Sanna's Post on the south to a point east of Jagersfontein road. They soon held the Free State east of the railway beyond Bethulie, and considerable numbers went south towards Smithfield and Rouxville, their determination, after their recent successes, being to harass the British force as much as possible. It was now becoming evident that all the present trouble was due to over-leniency, and it began to be urged that some measures must be adopted which would ensure for the conquerors of the enemy's country the respect that was due to them. The humanitarian attitude of Lord Roberts had produced an unlooked-for result. The Commander-in-Chief had attempted to administer justice for a seventeenth-century people on the ethics of those of the nineteenth, and the experiment had proved disastrous. The enemy, far from being impressed by the show of magnanimity, was laughing in his sleeve at his immunity from pains and penalties. Our troops were forced now to move in a country where nearly every man was a foe or a spy, and one who, moreover, thought meanly of us for the concessions which had been made. As an instance of contrast between our own and the Dutchman's mode of dealing with those considered as rebels, an instructive story was told. A Free State burgher at the outset of hostilities entered the Imperial service as a conductor of transport. It was a non-combatant's occupation, and one for which he was fitted, owing to his knowledge of the Kaffir and Dutch languages. This man was captured by the Boers, who, declaring him to be a rebel,

## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

instantly shot him dead. We, on the other hand, accepted an obsolete rifle, a flint-lock elephant gun belonging to the days of the Great Trek perhaps, as a peace-offering and then told the rebel to go away and turn over a new leaf. His new leaf resolved itself into unearthing Mausers and Martinis, and popping at us from the first convenient kopje—if not from the windows of his farm!

To this cause may be attributed the sudden return of so-called ill-luck, which seemed epidemic. April had brought with it an alarming list of losses at Sanna's Post, which was followed by a grievous total of killed, wounded, and missing—five companies lost to us—at Reddersburg. We had, moreover, disquieting days around Thabanchu, Ladybrand, and Rouxville, and were being forced gradually, and not always gracefully, to retreat. For instance, in the retirement from Rouxville, four companies of the Royal Irish, some Queenstown and Kaffrarian Rifles, had merely escaped by what in vulgar phrase we term "the skin of their teeth." It was merely owing to the smartness of General Brabant, who sent two squadrons of Border Horse from Aliwal North to the rescue, that the small force escaped being cut off. This officer's little band garrisoning Wepener was meanwhile beginning to test the Boer force in earnest.

### THE ESCAPE OF PRISONERS FROM PRETORIA

At this time great excitement prevailed owing to the escape from Pretoria of Captain Haldane, D.S.O. (Gordon Highlanders), who was captured after the disaster to the armoured train at Chieveley; of Lieutenant Le Mesurier (Dublin Fusiliers), who was taken prisoner with Colonel Moeller's force after the battle of Glencoe; and of Sergeant Brockie, a Colonial volunteer. These officers had a more adventurous task than even that of Mr. Churchill, for since the war correspondent's escape the Boers had naturally taken additional precautions, and had mounted extra guard over their prisoners. The officers most ingeniously contrived to dig a trench underneath the floor of the prison, and here they hid themselves. For eighteen long days they remained cramped in this small underground hole, in the daily expectation that the other officers and their guards were about to be transferred to new quarters, when a chance of escape would be offered.

Captain Haldane gave exciting details of his adventures in *Blackwood's Magazine*; but, before dealing with them, it is interesting to consider the position of the vast congregation of British officers that had gradually been collected within the confines of the Model School. Curiously enough, after all the fighting, the sum total of prisoners of war on both sides was now nearly equal. By

## The Transvaal War

the 23rd of March the Boer prisoners in our hands were 5000, while the British prisoners in Pretoria numbered some 3466. Since that date, through various unlucky accidents, the Boers had captured some 1000 more of our troops, and thus early in April the enemy almost equalled us in the matter of capture!

The Model School stands in the centre of the town. It is commodious, though devoid of privacy (on the principle of a boys' dormitory) well ventilated, lighted with electricity, and roofed



THE MODEL SCHOOL, PRETORIA.

with corrugated iron. At the time of the escape there was a gymnasium, and also a scaling-ladder against the wall, which suggested infinite possibilities to such men as Captain Haldane, who had all the exciting histories of "Latude," "Jack Sheppard," and "Monte Christo" at his fingers' ends. There were rough screens to enclose some of the cubicles, and the walls in some cases were decorated with cuttings from the illustrated papers, or with humorous sketches made by talented amateurs. Two of these were especially admired, a chase after President Steyn personally conducted by Lord Roberts, and a caricature of President

## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

Kruger, which latter was highly appreciated even by the Boers when it came under their notice.

The special nook of the Rev. Adrian Hofmeyer, who had made himself into a general favourite, and was laconically declared to be a "regular brick," was the most decorative of all, being made gay with various scraps of colour and design to cheer the weary eye. By this time the reverend gentleman, having had a more trying experience of incarceration than most, had got to look upon the Model School in the light of residential chambers, and consoled others with the account of his own experiences. His story was not an enlivening one:—

"I was lodged in the common jail, Cronje's law adviser having informed him it would not be legal to shoot me. Cronje consequently thought the best thing to do would be another illegality, namely, imprison a non-combatant and correspondent. Mr. Cronje has ample time to-day in St. Helena to meditate upon this and other illegal acts of his. I was locked up in a cell eighteen feet by nine feet, and for the first few days was allowed to have my meals at the hotel. Soon, however, this liberty was taken away, for it proved too much for the Christian charity of the Zeerust burghers to see a despised prisoner of war marched up and down from the hotel to the jail under police escort. Other restrictions were soon imposed also, and after a little while I was locked up day and night, the door of the unventilated cell being open only three times a day for fifteen minutes at a time. No books nor papers were allowed me, no visitors, and the few loyal friends who tried to supply me with luxuries were cruelly forbidden to do so by the authorities. I cannot help thinking to-day of the strange irony of fate. The commanders who practised this cruelty upon me were Cronje and Snyman. The one is to-day a prisoner of war, and can, perhaps, put himself in my place. He is an old personal acquaintance, too."

The worthy padre was afterwards removed, and gave a further description of his experiences.

"After eight weeks of such life I was taken to Pretoria, and there quartered in the Staats Model School with the British officers. Here everything was better, and I quickly recovered my health and strength. The building was a magnificent one, and the surroundings very pleasant, but our jailer, a Landdrost, and our guards, the Zarps, never forgot to remind us of the fact that we were prisoners. The food we got from Government sufficed for one meal; the rest we had to buy, being charged most exorbitant prices. When I left, the officers' mess amounted to £1600 per month for 144 officers. On my arrival, I was asked by the officers to conduct service for them every Sunday, in addition to that held by an Anglican clergyman. For two Sundays, therefore, we had two services a day, and then Winston Churchill escaped, and the following extraordinary letter was sent the officers by the Anglican clergyman:—

"GENTLEMEN,—By the kind courtesy of the Government, I have been permitted to hold services for you in connection with the Church of England, which services I have felt it a privilege on my part to conduct. After what has recently occurred—viz. the escape of Mr. Churchill from confinement—I ex-

## The Transvaal War

ceedingly regret that, in consideration of my duty to the Government, I must discontinue such regular ministrations, as I desire to maintain the honour due to my position. Of course I shall always be glad to minister to you in any emergency, with the special permission of the authorities, who will, with their usual kindness, duly inform me.—With my best wishes, I am, gentlemen, yours sincerely, —

"Out of charity, I do not publish the reverend gentleman's name,<sup>1</sup> but I can add that 'the emergency' referred to never presented itself. Since that time, I had the pleasure and honour of conducting the services every Sunday, and they were the pleasantest hours I spent in prison. Our singing was so hearty and good, that many of the townsfolk strolled up of a Sunday morning to hear us."

As may be imagined, all manner of devices were invented for the purpose of securing news, the only intelligence of outside events coming to the unhappy prisoners through the *Standard and Diggers' News*, which journal, of course, dwelt gloatingly on British disasters. But the authorities were suspicious. One day a harmonium was removed, owing to the treasonable practice of performing "God save the Queen"; on another, a cherished terrier was banished, as he was declared to be a smuggler, and charged with the crime of carrying notes in his tail! But at last, an ingenious ruse was successfully perpetrated. A man, accompanied by a dog, came to the railings and there engaged in a private dialogue, which savoured of the maniacal, till the eagerly listening officers discovered that there might be method in the strange man's madness. A sample of the scene was given by the correspondent of the *Standard* :—

"'Would you like a swim?' asked the master, and the dog, with a wag of his tail, answered 'Yes.' 'Ladysmith is all right,' continued the man, and the tail wagged assent. 'We will come again,' said the master, and the dog agreed. For a time the prisoners thought him mad, this man with the dog who talked in his beard, and mixed his dog talk with such names as 'Ladysmith,' 'Mafeking,' 'Cronje,' 'Roberts.' Then the truth dawned on them, and the 'Dog Man' became a hero, whose coming was watched with longing, and whose mutterings in his beard were 'as cool waters to the thirsty soul,' or as 'good news from a far country.' One day the 'Dog Man' was missing, and there was lamentation, until, looking towards the house opposite, the prisoners saw him standing well back in the passage, at the entrance to which two girls kept watch. The 'Dog Man' was waving his hat in eccentric fashion, and the waving was found to be legible to those who understand signalling. Next morning a tiny flag was substituted for the hat, and communication between the officers and the Director of Telegraphs was established by flag signal."

The prisoners endeavoured to keep up an air of jocosity, though,

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. J. Godfrey.



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gain the honour due  
to you in any  
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BRITISH PRISONERS ON THEIR WAY TO PRETORIA: THE FIRST HALT

Drawing by S. Begg



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## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

as one confessed, their tempers were "very short and inclined to be captious." Naturally their occupations were limited, and it was not unusual to see gallant commanders engaged in darning their socks, or washing their clothes under the pump. Their attire, too, was not of the choicest, some of them having been accommodated when sick with suits technically known as "slops," purchased for a low price in Johannesburg. Hence one officer disported himself in choice pea-green, while another figured in rich yellow. These prison suits were scarcely becoming, particularly as many of the smartest of the smart were growing beards, or, if not beards, the ungainly chin tuft or "Charley," which destroyed their martial aspect. Sometimes they engaged in games, bumble puppy and the like, and occasionally expanded to other sports. A letter from a sprightly member of the band to the *Eton College Chronicle* described the humorous side of their daily life:—

"MODEL SCHOOL, PRETORIA.

"DEAR MR. EDITOR,—Whilst following the fortunes of old Etonians in South Africa, perhaps it may have escaped your notice that a small and unhappy band has already reached Pretoria. Mr. Rawlins's House is represented by Captain Ricardo (Royal Horse Guards), and H. A. Chandos-Pole-Gell (Coldstream Guards); Mr. Carter's by Major Foster (Royal Artillery); the late Mr. Dalton's, Mr. Ainger's, and Mr. Luxmore's respectively by M. Tristram (12th Lancers), G. Smyth-Osbourne (Devonshire Regiment), and G. L. Butler (Royal Artillery); and Mr. Cornish's by G. R. Wake (Northumberland Fusiliers). The histories of their separate captures would take up too much of your valuable space. Some have been here but a short time, some many weeks; and during their captivity their thoughts turned to old Eton days, and the game of fives recommended itself to them as a means of passing some of the many weary hours. There was no "pepper-box," or "dead man's hole"; but a room, two of whose walls mainly consisted of windows, with the aid of three cupboards and a piece of chalk, was quickly converted into a fives court. Entries for a Public Schools' tournament were numerous, Eton sending three pairs. Tristram and Gell unanimously elected themselves to represent Eton's first pair, closely followed by Eton II., Ricardo and Osbourne, Eton III. being Wake and Butler. The facts that Tristram had recently been perforated with Mauser bullets, and Gell had spent Christmas and the three preceding weeks in the various jails between Modder River and Bloemfontein, were no doubt responsible for their not carrying off the coveted trophy. Alas! they were badly beaten in the first round by Marlborough. Not so Eton II. and III., who carried the Light Blue successfully into the second round, both having drawn byes. This good fortune could not last, and they fell heavily at the second venture, being beaten by Wellington and Rugby respectively. The ultimate winners proved to be Wellington, after a desperate encounter with Charterhouse.

"So much for our pleasures; our troubles are legion, but we will not burden you with them. We daily expect to hear of the E.C.R.V. sharing the hardships of the campaign, and covering themselves with glory to the tune of

"FLOREAT ETONA.

"P.S.—We all hope to be at Eton on the 4th of June.

"Feb. 14, 1900"

## The Transvaal War

(Curiously enough, the 4th of June brought to a close the deadly period of durance vile. On that date the gallant crew spent their last night as prisoners!)

To return to Captain Haldane and his partners in adventure. Ever since Mr. Churchill's escape he had racked his brains to discover a means of escape, and had made multifarious plans, many of which were rejected as absolutely hopeless, while many others failed after efforts which testified to the perseverance and ingenuity of their inventors. It was no easy matter after Mr. Churchill's exploit to hit on a means of evading the wily and now alert Boer.

The guard were armed with rifles, revolvers, and whistles, and as these consisted of some thirty men, who furnished nine sentries in reliefs of four hours, there was little hope of escaping their vigilance. Fortunately the prisoners, such as had plain clothes in their possession, were permitted to wear them, otherwise the dream of freedom could scarcely have been indulged in. Bribery was not to be thought of, and a repetition of Mr. Churchill's desperate dash for freedom was impossible. It remained, therefore, for Captain Haldane and his colleagues to invent a new and ingenious method of bursting their bonds. An effort to cut the electric wires to throw the place in darkness while they scaled the walls, proved a sorry failure, and at last, having tried the roof and other points of egress and found them wanting, the companions hit on the happy idea of burrowing a subterranean place of concealment. Here they thought to scrape on and on till they bored a tunnel into the open! The discovery of a trap-door in the planks under one of the beds lent impetus to their designs, and they arranged to excavate a route diagonally under the street, and so pass into the gardens of the neighbouring houses. Marvellous was the patience and perseverance with which they, almost toolless—with only scraps of biscuit tins and screwdrivers—toiled daily in the accomplishment of their plan, and pathetic their dismay when their tunnel finished up by landing them in several feet of water with a promise of more to come. But they were indefatigable. Captain Haldane, like the great Napoleon, argued that the word impossible was only to be found in the dictionary of fools. Rumours that the prisoners were to be removed to a new building in two or three days only contrived to render the conspirators more desperate in their craving to be at large, and again the trap-door system was discussed. The young men determined on revised operations, and hit on the plan of living underground in the cave they should dig, thus disappearing from Boer ken and conveying the idea that they had already bolted, leaving as evidence of flight their three empty beds! Here they proposed to wait till, the hue-and-cry after them having ceased, and the prison doors having been opened for the removal of the other officers, they could

## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

slink forth at their leisure. But the change of prison did not come to pass as soon as expected. The empty beds told their tale; the place was searched, the crouching creatures in their burrow heard the tramp of armed men above them, voices in close conference, and afterwards the departing footsteps of the discomfited Boer detectives. It was decided that the prisoners were gone, and further report, amplified by Kaffir imagination, declared that they were already on their way to Mafeking! Still, though safe from discovery, the plotters were far from comfortable. Food in very meagre quantities was smuggled through the trap-door, till at last, famine being the mother of resource, by a process of what they called "signalgrams," their wants and intentions were conveyed to those above. Then when the appointed raps gave notice of the opening of the mysterious portal, potted meats and other luxuries were liberally passed down. And here, in this ventilationless, miry hole, in darkness and dank-smelling atmosphere, they groped a weary existence, daring neither to cough, nor sneeze, nor whisper, lest discovery should rob them of success. They were unwashed—so grimy as to be unrecognisable even to themselves—they were cramped and covered with bruises, brought about by bumping their heads against the dome of their low dwelling; they were often hungry and sleepless, but they were buoyed up with a vast amount of hope and pluck.

Day after day sped on with unvarying monotony, and gradually hope began to exude at the pores. Six days passed, and they thought patience had come to the end of her tether. They longed to hold themselves upright, to see daylight, to eat their quantum of food, and, above all, to hear the sound of their own voices. But still they held on—longer, longer. Every day they knew made their chance of escape more secure, for the authorities in Pretoria, assured of their departure, had now ceased even from the habitual nine days of wonderment regarding their fate. Then they began to dig and burrow still further, this time with the assistance of a bayonet and a skewer, and for days and days pursued their silent, secret work, in hope to dig a channel some thirty feet long to reach the hospital yard beyond the Model School. Meanwhile they stored food in preparation for the great journey, and listened acutely for news of the proposed transfer of the prisoners to other quarters. At last they had their reward. A note was passed down to say that the officers were to be removed on the morrow. Then all was excitement. The curtain was drawing up on the play of which the prologue had promised so much. The trap-door was carefully fastened down, false screws being put into the screwholes so as to render the hiding-place as inconspicuous as possible.

At last came the looked-for hour. Sounds of packing-up and the shuffling passage of footsteps betokened activities. The com-

## The Transvaal War

mandant went his rounds, and then a cheery voice was heard to say, "All's well. Good-bye." They knew that was a signal—the end had come! So in time the whole party of prisoners disappeared, and with them their custodians! The coast was clear. Peeping forth from their ventilator the joyous hidden trio could view the street, the moving of baggage, and all the bustling preparations for a general exodus. Their rapture knew no bounds. But escape was even then deferred. Sightseers and police tramped through the vacated rooms all day, moving perilously near the trap-door, and laughing and jesting, unsuspecting of the precious haul that might have been theirs. It was late in the afternoon before the last visitors departed. Then, after collecting maps of their proposed route, taking a final meal, packing their meat lozenges, chocolate, &c., and money, they dressed and waited anxiously for the kindly cloak of night. . . .

Meanwhile the other prisoners were removed to a camp from which escape was almost impossible. The place was enclosed with barbed wire fencing standing as high as a man. It measured about one hundred and fifty yards in length, and in width at the ends might have measured fifty yards. From this pen it was possible to gaze out over the hills to see life with the eye of Tantalus, so near and yet so far—men and women passing, trees and houses and cattle, all giving pictures of the free life without, that it was impossible for them to share. No efforts now to evade the guard could be made, for the enclosure was dotted thickly with electric lights, and was so thoroughly illuminated in every corner that there was no spot where a man could not have read. The dwelling-house was walled, and roofed with zinc, bare within and comfortless, and in the dormitory one hundred and forty cots were ranged side by side. A few screens, as in the Model School, were arranged at some of the bedheads, but of privacy there was none. The exchange was a sorry one, and Captain Haldane and his companions, Mr. Le Mesurier and Mr. Brockie, were wise in making a vigorous bid to get clear of the fate that overtook their comrades.

Already a whiff of coming liberty seemed to reward these conspirators for their dark days of anticipation. Their meal and their preparations completed, they reconnoitred and discovered that all was clear. Then, joyously, the intending fugitives emerged from their terrible lair. With some difficulty they stood upright, their limbs refused their office, they felt old, rheumatic stricken, incapable of movement. But at last, boots in hand, creeping, as the French say, on *pattes de velours*, they dragged themselves to a broken window, and, passing through the gap made by the shattered pane, gained the yard. Climbing over the railings—luckily unnoticed in spite of the

## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

brilliant rays of the full moon—they made for the nearest road leading to the Delagoa Bay Railway. Fortunately for them young Brockie, who was a Colonial and up to the "tricks of the trade," donned the Transvaal colours round his hat. Added to this he wore his arm in a sling, to give the impression that he was a wounded Boer. Thus they got through the somewhat deserted street to the outskirts of the town unchallenged. Once a policeman almost spoke to them, his suspicion was on the eve of being aroused, but the solitary myrmidon of the law, inquisitive yet discreet, found himself face to face with three desperate men whose expression was



NEW CAMP FOR BRITISH PRISONERS AT PRETORIA.  
(Drawing by J. Schönberg.)

not reassuring! He wisely slunk off. Towards the railway line they now went, experiencing a series of hairbreadth 'scapes, for there were orders to shoot any one seen wandering on the railway track. But they dodged in holes and round corners, in rank grass and in ditches and dongas, traversing river and spruit, and plodding along the highway, now losing their bearings, now retracing their steps, ever striving to reach Elands River station, twenty miles east of Pretoria.

On the left of the railway line ran the river, and as they toiled on—the silver of the stream and the glint of the railway lines shimmering in the ray of the moon—they descried tents, heard voices, and, worse still, a dog's bark, inquisitive, suspicious. Quickly to earth

## The Transvaal War

they went, hiding and dodging in the long grass between river and line. This, the critical moment of their journey, forms one of the most exciting phases of Captain Haldane's altogether interesting narrative.

"After lying in the grass about twenty minutes, for we did not care to move so long as the dogs remained on the alert, we heard voices coming in our direction, and the barking of the dogs became more distinct. A whispered conference was held, and then we dragged ourselves like snakes diagonally back towards the river. Reaching a ditch, Le Mesurier, who was following me, came alongside and asked me if I had seen Brockie, who had been following him. I had not, so we waited a few moments; but seeing nothing of him, and the enemy drawing near, we crossed the obstacle, and found ourselves at the edge of the stream. Again we paused, this time for several minutes, and the searchers came in view, following our track.

"The crisis had come: to stay where we were meant probably recapture. I whispered to Le Mesurier to follow me quietly, and not to splash. The next minute I was in the river, which was out of my depth, and Le Mesurier dropped in beside me. Holding on to the roots of the reeds which lined the bank, we carefully pulled ourselves some distance down-stream, and then paused. The searchers and their dogs were evidently now at fault, and showed no signs of coming our way, so we continued our downward course, and ultimately swam across and into a ditch on the other side.

"We had been a good half-hour in the stream, which seemed to us intensely cold, and our teeth were chattering so that we could scarcely speak. My wrist-watch had stopped; but Le Mesurier's, a Waterbury, was still going, for it had been provided by his care with a waterproof case. We now crept along the ditch up-stream again, and then turned off towards the hillside, which was dotted with large boulders. Coming round the corner of one of these, we found a tent in front of us, and not caring to pass it, we tried to climb up the steep face of the hill. Failing at one point, we found a kind of "chimney," up which we climbed, pulling and pushing each other till the top was gained. A few minutes' rest was necessary, for our clothes were heavy with water and the climb had made us breathless. Le Mesurier had done wonders with his ankle—the cold water had been most efficacious. Next we walked along the rocky face of the hill, parallel to the direction we had followed below, and gradually descended to the level and struck a path. Brockie was irretrievably lost, and it was useless to attempt to find him. He had with him a water-bottle and sufficient food, and knew both the Dutch and the Kaffir languages. Following the path, we passed several clumps of bracken, one of which we selected as a suitable

## The Escape of Prisoners from Pretoria

hiding-place. To have walked farther in our wet and clinging garments might have been wiser, but we decided that we had had sufficient excitement for one night without trying to add to it."

So there they remained—wet, frigid, excited, aching—all through the long sleepless hours, with nothing to vary the monotony save the nip of the mosquitoes. When morning came, their jaded limbs, like the joints of wooden dolls, almost threatened to creak; and only with the warmth of sunrise did they regain some of their pristine elasticity. For food they now became anxious; their supplies were waterlogged, their chocolate was a thirst-creating mash, and their precious whisky bottle in the course of recent adventures had lost cork and contents. A miserable day passed hiding in a swamp, and crouching out of the light of day till again at night, and in a thunder-storm, they thought it advisable to resume their journey. Then, by the mercy of Providence, footsore, throatsore, heartsore, and hungry they came on a field of water melons. Though ravenously they took their fill, their joy was not of long duration. The inevitable bark of the Boer dog warned them to be off. After this they again lost their bearings, making needless detours, and only reaching Elands River station—worn, weary, and down-hearted—before daybreak. Then making their way to some gum trees that offered welcome shelter, they again sought to sleep, but it was not to be. Imagination had made molehills into mountains and footsteps into cracks of doom. A Dutch youth passed by, his dog growled and sniffed; discovery seemed imminent, but the hand of fate intervened, they remained safe. Two nights, three nights were passed on the veldt in anticipation of a train that might be on its way to Balmoral. Their sufferings, their anxieties, and risks make many a tale with a tale. Hiding continued during the day, now in an ant-bear hole, now among grasses sodden with dew, the fugitives, from caution, fatigue, and other causes, covering to that time only thirty-six miles in four days. Finally, to make a long story short, the unhappy wayfarers, their spirits and constitutions at the lowest ebb, were led by the kindness of a Kaffir into the safe keeping of a British subject, the manager of the Douglas Colliery Store, who then nourished them and helped them to repair the terrible havoc wrought by the past days of anxiety and starvation, and assisted them to make plans for getting over the border. Here, newly arrayed in decent clothing, washed and trimmed—for they had originally presented the effect of veritable scarecrows—they began to regain energy and hope. They were then initiated in the first moves of a scheme to carry them to safety. With the assistance of Dr. Gillespie, the doctor of the miners—a "rare guid" fellow from all accounts—they got, on the 24th of March, to the Transvaal Delagoa Bay Colliery; and here for some days following a con-



## The Transvaal War

piracy was set on foot to buy some bales of wool, sufficient to make a truck load, and forward the bales, plus the escaped prisoners, to a firm at Lorenzo Marques. The scheme succeeded, though only after some smart and sympathetic manœuvring on the part of the newly found British friends, and many hours of terrible risk and suspense. Finally, to the intense joy of the two adventurous ones, they found themselves on Portuguese territory. On Sunday the 1st of April they were free men! From that time their ways were fairly smooth. They were the heroes of the hour, for every one had heard of their story and was expecting them, Sergeant Brockie having preceded them after some equally exciting experiences.

On the 6th of April the gallant pair left Lorenzo Marques for Durban, Captain Aylmer Haldane hastening to rejoin his regiment, the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, at Ladysmith, and Mr. Le Mesurier (Dublin Fusiliers) going round to join General Hunter's Division in the Free State. Thus the two enterprising officers, after enduring almost unequalled tortures of body and mind, found themselves free to return to duty and fight again for the honour and glory of the Empire.

### PREPARATIONS FOR ACTION

Bloemfontein meanwhile was a strange mixture of pastoral simplicity and martial magnificence, and curious, almost wonderful, was the view from a distance of the landscape in the vicinity. The whole earth, as though blossoming, seemed to have thrown up mushrooms far and wide—mushrooms grey, and white, and green. Dotted among them were strange forms, like the shapes of antediluvian reptiles—grasshoppers, locusts of mammoth size. Coming nearer the town it was possible to recognise both mushrooms and reptiles for what they really were, namely, the tents and the guns of the largest army that England has put into one camp since the Crimea! In and out and round about wandered horses and mules innumerable, so numberless, indeed, that the casual onlooker wondered at the outcry for equine reinforcements. Yet these were urgently needed, and none but those "in the know" could comprehend how much the strategical problem relied for solution on their arrival, and how paralysed were the movements of the generals for want of them. Some people opined that the Commander-in-chief would start off for Pretoria at express speed, others hinted that his plan of campaign would be altered to meet the complications that had arisen owing to the renewed activity of the Boers in the south-eastern corner of the Free State. But Lord Roberts was unmoved by either impatience or disaster. He evidently determined to fritter his resources on no operations that could not be concerted and rapidly effective.

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LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD HUNTER, K.C.B.

Photo by Bassano, London

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## Preparations for Action

Meanwhile stores, ammunition, warm clothing (for the wintry weather was setting in), and boots were being brought in enormous quantities from the Cape. The wardrobes of the hard-fighting multitude were in sad need of repair, and some wag declared that certain tatterdemalions could only venture abroad after dark, for fear of shocking the Mother Grundys of Bloemfontein. Horses, too, were being gradually collected, for it was felt that until there was a sufficiency of remounts, General French's dashing evolutions would be too costly to be appreciable. The great gallop to Kimberley had cost an immense amount in horse-flesh—about 1500 out of 5000, some said—and, in consequence, the splendid cavalry was again reduced to impotence, just when the Boers, though demoralised by the surrender of Cronje, might have been pursued and punished as they deserved. According to later computation, it was decided that the army must wear out at the rate of 5000 horses a month, and therefore no move could be set on foot till the incoming supply was organised to meet the demand.

But for the state of horses and men the Field-Marshal could have stuck to his well-known principle, one acquired from the great Napoleon himself, namely, that a commander-in-chief should never give rest either to the victor or to the vanquished. As it was, he was stuck fast, and the Boers were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity thus given them to recuperate.

Up to the time of the Koorn Spruit and Reddersburg disasters things seemed to be ranging themselves satisfactorily, but little by little the authorities began to discover that the entire attitude of the apparently pacified burghers was decidedly false. By degrees they learnt that, instead of disturbing a hornet's nest and clearing it, they had, as it were, got into the midst of it themselves. It became evident that within the town there existed a conspiracy for the purpose not only of supplying the enemy with information, but keeping him ready equipped for hostility. Under the mas' of neutrality, certain Germans and others incited the burghers who had laid down their arms to take them up again. This, in the true sense of the word, for it was found that upwards of some 3000 weapons had been buried for use in emergency. But once General Pretymann obtained a true grasp of the situation, and could prove the duplicit nature of the persons with whom he had to deal, the work of weeding and deportation of the obnoxious element of Bloemfontein society was taken in hand.

Early in the month a prominent figure was removed from the fighting scene. The death was announced of Colonel the Hon. G. H. Gough<sup>1</sup> at Norval's Point. This distinguished officer

<sup>1</sup> Colonel the Hon. George Hugh Gough commenced his military career in 1871, when he took a commission as cornet in the 14th Hussars, of which he held the adjutancy

## The Transvaal War

till the time of his death had been acting as Assistant Adjutant-General to General French's Cavalry Division. His services had been many and brilliant, and his loss was deeply deplored.

The occupation of pacifying the disturbed western districts continued. General Settle and his forces had been operating between De Aar, Prieska, Kenhardt, and Upington, and General Parsons had occupied Kenhardt, and in a few days all traces of rebellion in the district between Van Wyks Vlei and Kenhardt had disappeared. As a matter of fact, it was discovered that many of the rebels were ignorant of why they were fighting at all. Some one addressed them and said, "What are you fighting for?" and they answered, "Equal rights for all white men in South Africa." "Then," said the speaker, "go and fight Paul Kruger. He alone refuses white men equal rights!" Still more ignorant were many of the subsidised sympathisers, while other foreigners who were forced to fight were evidently apathetic regarding the issue of the struggle. The following story was told of a Pole, who was not sorry when taken prisoner. When asked why he fought, he said, "Vat could I do? Dey give me musket and bandolier, and say, 'You must fight.' The captain say to me, 'You take that mountain,' and I ask, 'Vare shall I take it?'" If the tale was not absolutely accurate, it was still typical of the nonchalance of many who were engaged in the Transvaal cause.

Of changes there were many. On the 10th, it was announced in general orders that Major-General Sir H. Chermiside had been appointed to the command of the Third Division *vice* Lieutenant-General Sir W. F. Gatacre "ordered to England." There was a good deal of sympathy expressed by all who knew the difficulties with which General Gatacre had had to contend. But, as an old campaigner remarked, luck counts for as much as merit in actual warfare. "Give me a man who is lucky, and I ask nothing more." Luck was at the bottom of it all, and luck is all-important where multitudes of men have to follow, heart in hand, blindly rushing to glory in the footsteps of faith. General Gatacre's name now

for nearly four years until 1879, when he was promoted captain. In 1882 he obtained the brevet rank of major, and in 1883 he was promoted major and brevet lieutenant-colonel, and four years later he obtained his colonelcy. Colonel Gough passed through the Staff College in 1883, after serving as A.D.C. to the Lieutenant-General commanding the expeditionary force in Egypt in 1882. Among his staff appointments was that of private secretary to the Commander-in-chief (Lord Wolseley), which he attained in 1897, and again in 1898, after holding the post of assistant military secretary at the head-quarters of the army. Colonel Gough's war services included the Boer War of 1881, when he was aide-de-camp to the officer commanding the base and the lines of communication; the Egyptian campaign of 1882; and the Soudan Expedition of 1884-85. In the former his horse was killed under him at Tel-el-Kebir, and he was mentioned in despatches. He received the order of the Mejidieh (4th class), the bronze star, and the medal with clasp. In the Soudan Expedition, where he was in command of the Mounted Infantry, Colonel Gough was again mentioned in despatches, greatly distinguishing himself at the battle of Abu Klea, where he was wounded.

## Preparations for Action

spelt disaster, and as men had to be marched to ticklish work that wanted nerve and confidence of the best, a luckier commander was chosen. Accordingly, a much-trying officer—a soldier to the marrow—was sacrificed on the altar of necessity.

An Infantry Division from the Natal side was formed under the command of Sir Archibald Hunter, and called the Tenth Division, while the Eleventh Division was commanded by General Pole-Carew. General Ian Hamilton commanded a division of mounted infantry, ten thousand strong, formed of South African and other mounted Colonial contingents, and divided into two brigades under Generals Hutton and Ridley. As this division came in for a considerable amount of exercise in course of Lord Roberts's great advance, it is particularly interesting to examine and remember its component parts.

General Hutton's brigade comprised the Canadians, the New Zealanders, and all the Australians except the cavalry. The staff was as follows:—

Colonel Martyr, Chief Staff Officer; Lord Rosmead, Aide-de-Camp; Colonel Hoad (Victoria), Assistant Adjutant-General; Major Bridges (New South Wales), Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General; Major Cartwright (Canada), Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General; Colonel Gordon (Adelaide), officer on the line of communication; Major Rankin (Queensland), Staff Officer; Major Vandeleur (Scots Guards), advanced base transport officer; Captain Lex, Army Service Corps, supply officer.

The brigade consisted of four corps of mounted infantry, under Colonels Alderson, De Lisle, Pilcher, and Henry.

The first corps consisted of a 1st Battalion of Canadians, under Colonel Lessard; a 2nd Battalion, under Colonel Herchmer; and Strathcona's Horse, under Colonel Steel.

The second corps consisted of the New South Wales Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Knight, and the West Australians, under Captain Moor.

The third corps was formed of the Queenslanders, under Colonel Ricardo, and the New Zealanders, under Major Robin.

The fourth corps consisted of the Victorians, under Colonel Price; the South Australians, under Captain Reade; and the Tasmanians, under Captain Cameron.

Each corps had a battalion of Imperial Mounted Infantry attached to it, except the New South Wales Corps. A battery joined the division, as well as the Canadian Battery and a number of Vickers-Maxims. The New South Wales Army Medical Corps, under Colonel Williams, were the medical troops of the division.

General Ridley's brigade consisted entirely of South African troops.

Lord Roberts, always appreciative of the Colonials, ordered the

## The Transvaal War

body of Colonel Umphelby of the Victorian Contingent, who was killed at Driefontein, to be removed to Bloemfontein, there to be buried with honours appropriate to the distinction of that gallant officer's services.

Rearrangements of all kinds were taking place, the better to meet the peculiarities of the situation. Sir Redvers Buller was asked to co-operate by forcing Van Reenen's Pass, and threatening the enemy's line of retreat; but the task was one bristling with difficulties, as until Northern Natal should be cleared of the enemy he considered it unsafe to move westward. Accordingly, to meet the necessity for strong action in the east of the Free State, it was decided the Natal Field Army should continue its work in its own ground, minus the Tenth Division (Hunter's), which should be moved by sea to East London, one brigade (Barton's) to replace the Eighth Division (Rundle's), diverted from Kimberley to Springfontein, and one brigade (Hart's) to operate in the neighbourhood of Bethulie. It must here be noted that the country south of a line drawn from Kimberley to Bloemfontein seemed to be almost under control, but the pacification of the angle south-east of Bloemfontein had, as yet, to be accomplished.

Meanwhile, President Kruger made a tour of the positions of his army, in order to stimulate the Free Staters to further efforts; but very many of these began to show symptoms of unbelief, and refused any longer to swallow the assertions that Russia had taken London and that America was coming to the aid of the Boers, which the President and other kinsmen of Ananias in the Transvaal took the trouble to repeat. Daily, various Free Staters surrendered—some of them genuinely, while others merely gave up an old rifle for convenience' sake, burying some four others for use in emergency—took to their farms, and there developed from fine fighting-men into mean and despicable spies. With these slippery fish it was difficult to cope, and the problem of how to manage them took some little time to solve. Still, the task of remodelling and improving the army continued, all working to bring the long halt to a conclusion as speedily as possible.

Efforts wonderful and successful were made to increase the mobility, particularly of the mounted portions of the troops. One section of the Vickers-Maxim guns (1-inch guns) was attached to each cavalry brigade, and two sections to each brigade of mounted infantry. To add to the mobility of the horse artillery the waggons of each battery were reduced to three, spare teams being allowed for each gun.

The Eighth Division (Rundle) which, as we know, had been diverted from Kimberley to Springfontein, and the Third Division (Gatacre's, now Chermiside's) which was concentrated at Bethanie,

## Preparations for Action

were fulfilling a part of Lord Roberts's scheme for sweeping the right-hand bottom corner of the Free State clear of the enemy. Assisting them was General Hart, with a brigade of Hunter's Division, and engaged also in the operation were the mounted infantry, under General Brabazon, and part of the Colonial Brigade under General Brabant. Another part of this Brigade, which had moved towards Wepener at the beginning of the month, had there been blockaded by the enemy, and though their position was not regarded as serious, Lord Roberts was forming plans for a general converging movement which would have the effect of routing the Boers from the end of the Free State altogether.

Energetic measures of every kind were adopted for the control of the Free State. General Pretymann, who had been appointed Military Governor of Bloemfontein, developed a scheme for the protection of those who had taken the oaths of submission, and who were hourly in dread of the reprisals of the Boers. Though some of the Free Staters for long had been entirely sick of the war, and were only forced into fighting in fear of ill-treatment by the Boers, others, as we are aware, had merely hidden their arms in the determination to take up fighting whenever a good chance offered. In order to secure the interests of the pacific, and keep an eye on the treacherous, General Pretymann began to organise a corps of Mounted Police for service in the Free State, at the same time dividing the conquered radius into sections. Each section was to be administered by a Commissioner chosen for his experience in Colonial matters. Colonel Girouard, R.E., also formed a railway corps, employing some ten volunteers from each regiment to help in the enormous operations now being set on foot. A change was also made in the postage stamp of the country. The existing issues of stamps of President Steyn's Republic were marked V.R.I. in black ink, and also with figures denoting their value as recognised by the Imperial Government. The three-penny stamps were marked with the nominal value of 2½d., to agree with the twenty-five centimes of the Postal Union. Naturally the philatelists were all on the alert, and stamps as well as trophies were fetching absurd prices in the town.

Of recreation there was also a little. On the 18th of April a somewhat original concert was organised by the war correspondents, on behalf of the Widows' and Orphans' Funds of London and Bloemfontein. The originality of the scheme and the interest thereof lay in the fact that conquerors and conquered met together on the common ground of charity, and mutually contributed to make the undertaking a success. £300 were realised. Mr. Rudyard Kipling put forth his quota. He did honour to the Colonials in verse, and this ditty, to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," was sung



## The Transvaal War

by Miss Fraser, the daughter of Mr. Steyn's former opponent for the Presidency. Among the marketables were portraits of Lord Roberts and Mr. Kruger. These were the work of some of the artist journalists. "Bobs" was "knocked down" for a big figure, and became the property of Lord Stanley, a valuable trophy that may well become an historical heirloom. This concert was only one of the many efforts at harmony made by Lord Roberts, who, as diplomatist and statesman as much as soldier and conqueror, foresaw a future wherein the people of the Free State, originally actuated by no animosity towards the British, would become reconciled to the beneficent rule of the British Empire, as contrasting with the despotic rule of the Boer Republics, and live side by side with us in the true spirit of liberty, fraternity, and equality enjoyed by British subjects.

### WITH LORD METHUEN—THE BATTLE OF BOSHOF

Against the misfortunes of Koorn Spruit and Reddersburg we would place one brilliant victory—a victory gained by Lord Methuen at Boshof, mainly through the smartness, bravery, and unspeakable steadiness of the Imperial Yeomanry, who were under fire for the first time, and the splendid dash of the Kimberley Corps, whose experiences during the siege had lifted them almost to the rank of veterans.

It may be remembered that Lord Methuen at the end of February took up the post of Administrator of the Kimberley district, which extends as far south as the Orange River, subsequently leaving Colonel Kekewich in command of the local forces. The General commenced active operations on the western frontier, for the purpose of clearing the country of rebellious obstructions, and protecting the lines of communication with the north.

At Boshof there was concentrated a comparatively large army, composed of two batteries of artillery, about 6000 infantry, and 1000 mounted infantry, which were massing together to march to Kroonstadt, where they expected eventually to take their place as the left wing of the main army. The town itself presented a desolate aspect, all the Dutchmen being absent on commando under Commandant Duplessis, and being in force on the Vaal River, some miles distant.

Lord Methuen hearing that a detachment of the enemy was moving along the Jacobsdal road, and threatening his communications, ordered Colonel Peakman to effect its capture. As a result of this order a most successful fight took place, some five miles east of Boshof, on the 5th of April.

Taking part in the action were two companies of the Bucks

## The Battle of Boshof

Yeomanry, one of the Berks Yeomanry, one of the Oxford Yeomanry, one company of the

Sherwood Rangers, one of the Yorkshire Yeomanry, and also the Kimberley Mounted Volunteers. With these was the Fourth Battery R.F.A.

The Imperial Yeomanry under Lord Chesham on this occasion had their first chance of distinguishing themselves and seized it, behaving, as some one who looked on said, "like veteran troops." The affair began in haste. A Yeomanry patrol suddenly discovered the enemy and announced his near approach. There was a rush. "To horse! to horse!" sang out the troopers keen for action. Their steeds were grazing, but in less than thirty minutes every man was careering off to duty. The Boers, some sixty-eight in number, were tenancing a kopje, and round their lair the troops disposed themselves, Lord Scarborough's Squadron of Yeomanry to left, and the Kimberley Mounted Corps to right. The rest of the Yeomanry attacked from the front, occupying two small kopjes some fourteen hundred yards distant from the enemy. These promptly greeted them with a persistent fusillade. Then the right flank slowly began to creep up, taking advantage of cover as nature had provided, while the front marched across the open. This advance of the troops was masterly, though no cover was available till the base of the kopje occupied by the enemy was



TYPES OF ARMS.—12 lb. Field Gun of the Elswick (Northumberland Service) Battery. By permission of Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co., the makers.

## The Transvaal War

reached. Method and coolness were displayed to a great extent, and to these qualities was due the day's success. For three and a half hours the operations lasted, the men closing gradually in, and finally surrounding the kopje and storming it. The surrounding process, both by the Yeomanry and the Kimberley force, was carried on with amazing skill and coolness till the moment came for which all were panting. The Yeomanry then fixed bayonets and charged. A rush, a flash of steel, and then—surrender. The Boers hoisted a white flag! but even as they did so their comrades poured deadly bullets on our advancing men. Captain Williams of the "Imperials," who was gallantly in advance of his comrades, dropped, shot dead in the very hour of victory. There was small consolation in the fact that the murderer was instantly slain by an avenging hand.

At this time the men had gained the hill and were within seventy yards of the Boer trenches. But the Boers, notwithstanding their display of the white flag, continued to blaze with their rifles till a Yeomanry officer shouted that he would continue to fire unless the enemy threw down their rifles and put up their hands. This threat brought the cowards to their senses. They obeyed, and the position was gained with a rousing, ringing cheer. Then came the sad part of triumph, the collection of the gallant dead and the succour of the wounded. Among the first were three, Captains Williams and Boyle, and Sergeant Patrick Campbell. The enemy's dead and wounded numbered fourteen, while our wounded numbered seven.

Captain Cecil Boyle was shot through the temple within eighty yards of the Boer position while gallantly leading his men. He was a soldier to the core, one who, merely from a sense of patriotic responsibility, was among the first to leap to his country's call, and who threw into his work so much energy, zeal, and grave purpose that the atmosphere of the camp made him feel at the end of a week as if, to use his own words, "I had done nothing but soldiering all my life." He, at the invitation of his old chum, Colonel Douglas Haig, began work at Colesberg "to watch the cavalry operations." There he had what he thought the supreme good luck to be appointed galloper to General French. After the relief of Kimberley and the capture of Cronje he went to the Cape to meet the Oxfordshire Yeomanry, and with them gallantly advanced to meet his fate—the first Yeomanry officer in this history of ours to fall in action.

At the close of the fight the clouds which had been lowering over the position like a pall of purple suddenly burst. Torrents descended, saturating the heated troops and sopping the ground whereon lay the maimed and slain. With thunder bellowing and lightning splitting the skies, with an accompaniment of deluge and darkness, the troops and their prisoners found their way to camp.

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**COLONEL LORD CHESHAM, Imperial Yeomanry**

Photo by Russell & Sons, London

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## The Battle of Boshof

Under cover of the obscurity some of the latter made a wild endeavour to escape, but the Yeomanry were too proud of their "bag" to allow a single one to get free, and finally had the satisfaction of seeing their bedraggled prize lodged in jail.

Lord Methuen commanded, and expressed himself much gratified with the success of the operations, with the courage and coolness and method with which all his orders were carried out. Colonel Peakman, of Kimberley fame, who had already accomplished a quite unusual record of fighting, displayed an immense amount of talent in the field, and his corps, in every way worthy of him, cut off the enemy's retreat with remarkable skill. So much indeed, that the Boers complained of the slowness of the troops who, by apparently retiring hurriedly, drew them within range of the British volleys! Our troops were pitting themselves now against no unruly or uninitiated barbarians, for the hostile force was under the command of the notable Frenchman, Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil. This gallant officer was killed by shrapnel from the 4th Field Battery Royal Field Artillery before the display of the white flag by the Boers. He was accompanied by many of his compatriots, who were taken prisoners. The force indeed was mainly cosmopolitan, it being composed of Hollanders, Frenchmen, Germans, and Russians, three Boers only belonging to the commando. Not a man of the enemy escaped. Eight were killed, six wounded, and fifty-four polyglot prisoners, with sixty horses and their baggage, were brought into camp. Two guns were also captured.

The courage and dash of the Imperial Yeomanry was eulogised on all sides, even by the Colonials, who hitherto had been somewhat disposed to look down on their brother Volunteers from civilised and inexperienced England. The magnificent spirit which inspired one and all, the grit displayed by the wounded, and their self-abnegation were the subject of much comment. A Colonial trooper, writing home his applause, said: "Where all behaved so well it is almost invidious to mention any one in particular, but as an instance of the fine spirit which animated them, I would mention two whose names I have ascertained, Sergeant-Major Coles, of the Bucks Yeomanry, and Throgmorton, a trooper in the Oxforas. These two continued in action after being wounded, the former with a bullet through the shoulder, and the latter with a gunshot wound in the head, and sooner than crowd the ambulance they rode in afterwards, twelve miles in the darkness, through one of the worst thunder-storms it has been my lot to witness. What they must have suffered in the state they were in they alone know."

From all accounts the French colonel who fell was entirely confident of success. Before the engagements he sent an invitation to his compatriots to join his force. He thought he had discovered the

## The Transvaal War

flaws in the Boer armour, and was bent on giving the Federals an object lesson in how to defeat and scatter the British. He also issued a manifesto addressed to the French legions, the translation of which ran thus :—

To the Legionaries, who have known me as their comrade.—Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Men,—I know that you have not forgotten me, and we understand each other, and therefore I appeal to you. There is here in front of the Vaal a people whom it is desired to rob of its rights, its properties, and its liberty in order to satisfy some capitalists by its downfall. The blood that runs in the veins of this people is in part French blood. France, therefore, owes to it some striking manifestation of help. Ah, well! You are the men whom a soldier's temperament, apart from all the great obligations of nationality, has gathered under this people's flag, and may that flag bring with it the best of fortune! To me you are the finished type of a troop that attacks and knows not retreat."

He also wrote to the Parisians :—

"The Dutch are splendid at defence, but they cannot follow up a defeat and crush the enemy, which the French legionaries would be able to do. . . . Come and I will receive you here; and I promise you that very few days shall elapse before we will show the world the mettle of which the French legionaries are made."

The display to unprejudiced onlookers was distinctly poor, however, and the example of strategy set by the gallant Gaul scarcely served to demonstrate astounding military genius.

The Colonel's plan of campaign was nevertheless most carefully made out, as a document which subsequently fell into Lord Methuen's hands served to show. Very dramatic sounds the orders for the movements on April 4, as translated by the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* :—

"To-night the detachment of the raid will attack Boshof and follow its route, under the favour of a surprise and the prevailing darkness. For this purpose, the following dispositions will be observed: The column will set off at four o'clock in the afternoon, with the detachment of Boers under Field-Cornet Daniell, in such a manner as just to reach Boshof by night. At a certain point the detachment will divide, and will reach their respective places of assembly to the east and west of the town. Boshof is situated in a plain, and is flanked by certain kopjes, of which the importance and distance from the town are reported as follows: to the north, two naked kopjes, weakly guarded, and a good distance from the town. Between them passes the Hoopstadt-Boshof road. To the east, on the road to Kimberley, which it commands, one kopje, which is not guarded by the enemy. Upon this the Boers will take up their position. Finally, to the south-east of the town, and exactly opposite to it, there is a kopje, where the English have an outpost of fifty men. On the summit of this is formed a small parapet of stones, about half the height of a man. This will form part of the attack reserved for the detachment of the raid.

"The Hoopstadt and Kimberley roads cross in the interior of the town.

"The plan of attack will be carried out under the following conditions: At eleven o'clock in the evening, the Boers under Field-Cornet Daniell will be in

## The Battle of Boshof

position on the Kopje C, and the telegraph wire on the Kimberley road will be cut by them. At the same time, the raiding party will assemble behind the Kopje E, situated two kilometres from the town. The horses and the Scotch cart will there await the final operations, as well as the native servants, if there are any. One man will be left behind with each team of six horses. Commandant Saeremburg and Lieutenant de Breda will, before the departure, choose these men, the importance of whose mission will be readily understood, since upon their vigilance will depend the safety of the expedition in the event of retreat. The group left behind will be under the orders of Nicolle. The men will remain standing at the head of the horses, which will be saddled and bridled, the cart boys at the head of the mules, all ready harnessed.

"At half-past eleven, the attacking party will march in three échelons, twenty mètres apart, the centre in the van. The centre échelon, under the special direction of the General, will be formed by the French platoon. The centre échelon, commanded by Commandant Saeremburg, will consist of one-half of the Dutch, and the left, under Lieutenant Bock, of the other half. Furthermore, the men who have been in the habit of messing together in groups will appoint a leader, from whom they will on no account separate nor get out of touch. When these groups do not exist, or exceed ten in number, the leaders of the party will break them up and form parties of six or eight, and appoint a head of the group. The General will see these heads of groups at three o'clock in his camp, to give them instructions further than can be detailed here.

"In the approaching march the commandants will give their orders in a low voice, and the men will be ranged in line, so that they can see the heads of groups and lie down instantly. It is of importance, also, to watch the investigations of the search-light, if the English have one at Boshof, which has not yet been ascertained. The moment the ray is turned towards the échelon, the leader will make his group lie down, and the march will not be resumed until the light is turned away. At the rise of Kopje D, a halt will be made behind the cemetery, and the Saeremburg échelon will carry the kopje by assault and will occupy it. From there it will hold . . . the two kraals Z Z, where the English encamped in the market-place in Boshof itself could make the first attempt at resistance. In no case, for an easily understood reason, will it fire upon the town. Firing, moreover, can only be carried out by volleys discharged by word of command given by the head of each group.

"Continuing their march, the two other échelons will pass a well behind the kraals, and will attack the English camp outside the town. In this effect, the French échelon, after firing two volleys, will advance at the charge, with the cry, 'Transvaal and Free State!' and will thus complete the panic. As there are no bayonets, the rifles will be kept loaded and carried under the arms at the position of the charge. After having crossed the camp from the east to the south, the rout will be accomplished by firing. Lieutenant Bock's échelon will remain under the orders of the General, as a reserve, should the Boers placed on the Kimberley road on the Kopje C have to deal with the fugitives. He could also render assistance, if the enemy issuing from Boshof should endeavour to turn the attack. He would then be informed of this eventuality by Field-Cornet Coleman, who will cover the left of the attack in such a manner as to observe all that may be menaced. For this purpose, the Afrikanders will conform to the general movement of the march of approach, and retire as soon as the attack begins on the west of the English camp to a distance suitable for observation.



## The Transvaal War

"To facilitate recognition the brim of the hats will be covered with a white handkerchief.

"The meagreness of our information does not permit of even an approximate estimate of the English force. The forces in Boshof seem, however, to be between 300 and 400 men. Whatever happens, the assailants should remember that their moral superiority is overwhelming, and even in the event of retreat, they can easily, covered by the darkness, regain their horses and retire from Boshof without risk."

In view of these magnificent preliminaries, one may look without vanity at the celerity and completeness of the British operations which were rewarded with victory. The Frenchman's *programme* makes a quaint contrast to the terse description of a quartermaster-sergeant of the Imperial Yeomanry, who thus sketched the events of the 5th of April:—

"We received orders to turn out as soon as possible; we were soon all bustle, caught and saddled our horses, and off we went post-haste. One of our patrols had been shot in the night by a foraging party of Boers. We trotted off for about two hours, and then caught them out-spanned at the bottom of a kopje. We dismounted and got on some more kopjes close by and began exchanging shots. Then we mounted again, and half of us went round to their right and half to the left to cut off their retreat; and our artillery, of which three guns had followed us, began to shell them in front. When we had got well round them we dismounted again and advanced to the attack, taking cover. Then, after a few volleys, ran up about twenty yards; then a few more volleys, and up again until we were within about a hundred and fifty yards, when we made a rush for it with fixed bayonets. About seventy yards from the top there was a large wire fence. We had to clamber through, and then, when we were about fifty yards away, they came out and surrendered. There were thirteen of them killed, and we had fifty-four prisoners, amongst them General de Villebois-Mareuil and four or five more Frenchmen. They had a cart with them full of ammunition and dynamite, so they were evidently on some foray to blow some bridge or other up. They were stationed on two kopjes. The one our own lot went against was on the right. Most of their bullets fell short whilst we were advancing, and when we made our final rush they went over us. About twenty of them escaped before we reached them. It was about five o'clock when the fight was over, and we commenced a twelve-mile march to camp about 5.45. After going about two miles it came on dark, and we had a very heavy thunder-storm all the way to camp, which we reached about ten o'clock last night, wet to the skin."

The blow so deftly and quickly struck at the marauding parties of the Boers was valuable from many points of view. It served to restore confidence in Lord Methuen's leadership—confidence which had been considerably shattered by the disaster of Majersfontein—and it helped to suppress a tendency to raiding in the west of Cape Colony. So complete a success could not but have a sobering effect on the rebels, and give them pause in their mad career of hostility.

## The Battle of Boshof

On the 7th of April, at dawn, Lord Methuen marched ten miles on the Hoopstadt Road to Zwartkopjesfontein Farm without opposition. On the 8th he proceeded further, but finally, by Lord Roberts's orders, retraced his steps to Zwartkopjes. On the 10th, at daybreak, two flying columns started forth—General Douglas to south-east and east of the camp, Colonel Mahon (commanding Kimberley Mounted Corps) from Boshof towards Kimberley. Colonel Mahon's movements, on which the relief of Mafeking was depending, must be taken in detail later on. Lord Methuen operated in this district till the 17th of May, when he moved to Hoopstadt and brought his force within the zone of the main operations. On the 21st he proceeded to Kroonstadt.

In the Kimberley district the First Division had been rearranged as follows:—

Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen. 9th Brigade (Major-General C. W. H. Douglas).—1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Loyal North Lancashire, 2nd Northamptonshire, 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry. 20th Brigade (Major-General A. H. Paget).—Composed of Militia Battalions, 4th, 20th, and 44th Field Batteries; 37th Howitzer Battery. Brigade Imperial Yeomanry (Colonel Lord Chesham).—1st Battalion, 3rd Battalion, 5th Battalion, 10th Battalion. Cape Police, Diamond Fields Horse, Part Kimberley Light Horse, Diamond Fields Artillery.

## CHAPTER II

MAFEKING, APRIL

ON the first Sunday in April Lieutenant Hanbury Tracy, with two waggons, was sent to bring in the dead, after the unsuccessful but gallant effort made by Colonel Plumer to enter the town on the 31st of March. As has been said, Commandant Snyman's report of the number of slain was greatly exaggerated, and the wounded he would not give up. Captain Crewe, who had died of his injuries, was buried in the melancholy little cemetery at Mafeking, already a sad memorial of deeds of daring. Of Lieutenant Milligan nothing definite was known, and it was believed that he was among those who had been buried by the Boers. Captain Maclaren (13th Hussars) was still in the hands of the enemy—a prisoner, and seriously, if not mortally, wounded. The total casualties on Colonel Plumer's side were said to be seventy-eight. Two officers and six men were killed, three officers and thirty-six men were wounded, and one officer and eleven men were taken prisoners.

On the 4th of April there was intense joy over the arrival of Lieutenant Smitheman, who appeared at Mafeking carrying a despatch for Colonel Baden-Powell from Colonel Plumer. His appearance was naturally a signal for surprise and excitement, as every crumb of news from the outside world was precious as pearls. Previous to this visit only one white man—Reuter's cyclist—had succeeded in getting through the Boer lines. Mr. Smitheman was well acquainted with the country, and had distinguished himself as a scout in the Matabele campaign. His latest exploit was full of moment, and there was no doubt that in thus establishing a link with the garrison his visit would be fraught with important results when the opportunity to attempt the relief of the garrison should present itself. This smart officer had made his way into the beleaguered town piloted by a native diviner—a personage who claimed by means of a rod to ascertain the whereabouts of Boers, as other diviners have decided the presence of water. Whether Lieutenant Smitheman owed his safe conduct to the acumen of the native or to the dexterity of his own actions was much disputed, but the result was eminently satisfactory.

Commandant Snyman having been absent for a day or two, the

## Mafeking, April

community enjoyed temporary peace, but on the 6th the tyrant was back again, and by way of good-morrow his gun "Creaky" blew up the office of Major Goold Adams. On the 7th, Mr. Smitheman returned to Colonel Plumer, bearing upon him much serviceable information. A party of native women endeavoured to escape to Kanya, but were intercepted by the enemy—stripped, sjamboked, and forced to return. There was also a smart fight between the Boers and some Fingoes, who had gone on a cattle-raiding expedition. These defended themselves valiantly for twenty-five



THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF MAFeking.

hours, but only one man was left to tell the tale. This man succeeded in crawling to the shelter of some reeds, and thus escaped unobserved.

The following correspondence now passed between Commandant Snyman and Colonel Baden-Powell in reference to the former's alleged employment of "barbarians" by the British in cattle-raiding expeditions:—

"MARICO LAAGER, MOLOFO, April 7.

"To his Honour Colonel BADEN-POWELL, Mafeking.

"Enclosed I beg to send to you a copy of a pass signed 'A. T. Mackenzie, Black Watch,' and dated April 4, which is a clear proof that Kaffirs are sent out, with your Honour's knowledge, naturally, as head officer, to plunder, rob, and murder. I am very sorry to see that tyranny carries away the good

## The Transvaal War

nature of so polite a nation as the English. They know that the barbarians have nothing else in view. Twenty Kaffirs were sent last week in a northerly direction by an English officer, according to the statement of a wounded native who was taught a lesson by one of my burghers. Thirty-two were sent on the 4th, according to a pass found in the pockets of one of the killed. They were all shot yesterday. I request you to be kind enough to fetch the bodies. Please send an ambulance under a Red Cross flag in the direction of Canton Kopje, and notify me immediately the waggons have left. I will send some of my burghers to point out the battle-field.—Your Honour's obedient servant,  
"J. P. SNYMAN,"

"MAFEKING, April 7.

"To his Honour General SNYMAN.

"Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of to-day. In regard to the pass signed 'Mackenzie,' this man had no authority to issue a pass of any kind, much less for the purpose stated. I am obliged to you for bringing the case to my notice. As regards your Honour's statement that your burghers killed thirty-two natives, I beg to inform you that I know nothing whatever about these men. They were certainly not acting under orders received from myself, nor, so far as I am aware, from any of my officers. I would point out that there are a number of natives about the country in a destitute condition owing to their homes having been burnt and their cattle stolen by your burghers, and it is only too probable that they have taken the law into their own hands to endeavour to obtain food. Of this I have warned your honour before. For their acts I must decline to be held in any way responsible.—I have the honour to be your obedient servant,  
R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL,

Colonel commanding H.M. troops in Mafeking."

On the 10th of April, in the dead of night, the enemy's field-guns were moved to positions completely surrounding the town, and shells were poured in with unparalleled persistency. Thirty dropped into the women's laager—four into the hospital. Under cover of the bombardment the Boers, who had been reinforced by a German corps, made an attack on Fort Abrams, which they imagined had been disabled by their shell-fire. They were somewhat amazed to find that the garrison of the fort was not only alive, but kicking. The corporal in charge, who had calmly waited till his assailants had got within range, suddenly poured a fierce volley on the approaching numbers. Result: five of the enemy were left on the field, to be recovered later under a Red Cross flag. The effects of bombardment were many and various. At one time the Dutch Church was struck, at another some shells bounded on the roadway, flew through the air straight across the town, landing with awful detonations a mile on the other side. Some failed to burst, and then the duty of extracting the charge was a ticklish one. One man in so doing was blown to ribbons, pieces of him being cast to the winds and picked up quite a hundred yards from the scene of the disaster. Another man was so forcibly struck that a portion of leg and boot were forced through the iron-roofed verandah some seventy yards off!

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**SERGEANT—18th HUSSARS**

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## Mafeking, April

Every house was pocked with its melancholy tale. There were holes you could jump through in the ceiling of some of the rooms, while others were shattered past recognition. Dixon's Hotel had its end smashed, and the market-place bore signs of merciless battering.

On the 12th a welcome guest came in the form of a pigeon, bearing a message from Colonel Plumer. No small creature of the winged tribe had ever before conveyed so much satisfaction, save perhaps the first prominent performer in the days of the ark. News also arrived by runner, of Mr. Smitheman's safe arrival, and a message from her Majesty was delivered to Colonel Baden-Powell. This kindly expression of the Sovereign's sympathy was highly appreciated, and served to inspirit the whole community.

Later, a splendid effort was made by Colonel Plumer's force to run a herd of cattle into the town. A party of Baralongs, under a native captain, got to within seven miles of the town when they were attacked on both flanks by the enemy. They nevertheless pursued their way, screening themselves as far as possible behind the bodies of the cattle, which were driven in front of them. But the Boer fire was unerring, and soon only fifteen of the poor beasts remained. These, at last, had to be abandoned, for owing to the lack of ammunition the cattle-runners were forced to make themselves scarce. Such as were wounded were left behind, and were murdered by the Boers. Several native women who, from fear of starvation, attempted to pierce the Boer lines, were also put to death. This behaviour much incensed the British, for the Baralongs had from the first earned the esteem of the community by their unswerving loyalty. Major Baillie, writing home, eulogised their conduct, and expressed a hope that their devotion would be recognised at the end of the war. He said :—

"After the first day's shelling the mouthpiece of the Baralong tribe, Silas Molemo, came up to Mr. Bell, the resident magistrate, and said to him, 'Never mind this; we will stick to you and see it through,' which they certainly have done. They are not a tribe who would make a dashing attack, or, to use the expression, 'be bossed up' to do things which they don't particularly want to; but, given a defensive position, they will hang on to it for all they are worth, as they have proved many times during the war in the defence of their stadt. They have had their cattle raided, their outlying homesteads destroyed, their crops for this year are nil, and all through a time when the outlook to a native mind must have seemed most black they have unswervingly and uncomplainingly stuck to us, and never hesitated to do anything they were called on to do." (It is pleasant to note that after the relief the Baralongs received formal recognition of their splendid loyalty.)

"The better the day, the better the deed," was evidently the motto



## The Transvaal War

of the Boers, for on Good Friday they applied their energies to the construction of new trenches and fortifications about fifteen hundred yards beyond their former position. In order not to be behind the times, the bread ration of the day was marked with a cross, to do duty as a "hot cross bun." On the following day misfortune hung over the place, for two troopers, Molloy and Hassell, belonging to the Fort Ayr garrison, were caught by a shell and mortally wounded. On Easter Day there were sports to revive the spirits of the garrison.

On the 19th of April the Creusot gun was withdrawn, and the inhabitants took heart. To vary their menu they now engaged in a locust haul, the result of which was to supply a third variant to the bill of fare. Lady Sarah Wilson, telegraphing to her friends, described her diet of horse sausages, minced mule, and curried locusts! The latter insects were reported to be tender as chicken and as tasty as prawn "almondised." The natives had a good meal, and visibly grew fat. On the following day a telegram was received from Lord Roberts requesting the garrison to hold out till the 18th of May. It was disappointing, none could deny, but they consoled themselves that a message showing they were marked down in the programme of "coming events" was better than nothing at all. Fortunately the food still held out. Water—pure water—was rare as Edelweiss, and liquor of other kind was unobtainable. Only money was what our friends on the Stock Exchange call "tight." The bank was closed to the general public, and her Majesty's presentment upon a coin was a prize to be cherished and clung to till—well, till the crack of doom should make the ever-promised and never-realised relief unnecessary.

But the great food problem well-nigh exhausted all the energies of those concerned with it. Captain Ryan, D.A.A.G., sat daily in the interior of his bomb-proof office receiving a procession of persons who filed in to make their impossible demands, and deliberating on the curious fact that the stomach rules the world. The honour of the British Empire at that moment hung by a mere thread—it was a question of how slender a thread of nourishment could keep body and soul tacked together to represent the figure of an Englishman! Nevertheless Mafeking, like Kimberley, was bound to have its marriage bells. A Dutch bride, ignorant of English, was led to the altar by a private of the Bechuanaland Rifles, ignorant of Dutch. Philosophers predicted considerable felicity, as between them the couple had sufficient language for love-making and scarce sufficient for controversy.

At this time Captain Ryan made a statement regarding the supplies of the town, which serves to show the pitch to which caution was carried:—

## Mafeking, April

"The total number of white men is approximately 1150, of white women 400, and of white children 300. The coloured population consists of some 2000 men, 2000 women, and 3000 children.

"Both the white and coloured men originally received eight ounces of bread. The allowance has now been reduced to six, but a quart of soup is given to make up the deficiency. Half a gallon of sowan porridge a day will sustain life. The recipients are of three classes; those who receive it in lieu of two ounces of bread; those who wish to purchase food over and above the quantity to which they are entitled; those who are absolutely destitute, both black and white, and who receive the porridge free. It has been suggested that the natives should not be charged for sowan porridge, but it is thought unwise to pauperise either blacks or whites. If any profit has been made from the sale by the end of the siege it will be employed in buying grain for the many native women and children in Mafeking who have been involved in a quarrel which is not theirs.

"The horse soup is made from the carcasses of animals which had ceased to be serviceable and those killed by the enemy's fire, as well as horses and donkeys purchased from individuals who can no longer afford to keep them. This soup is unpopular among the natives, but this is due rather to prejudice than to its quality.

"The distribution of supplies is entirely under Imperial control. The Army Service Corps possesses a slaughter-house, a bakery, and a grocery, at which the authorities receive and distribute all vegetables, and it receives and distributes milk to the hospital, to women and children, and to men who have been medically certified to need it.

"At present the hospital is supplied with white bread, and it is hoped that the supply will be continued. Hospital comforts are issued to such as are in need of them, both in and out patients, on receipt of an order from a medical officer. For the nurses and doctors, who work day and night, the authorities endeavoured to provide slightly better rations than those available for the general community. Our sources of supply have been chiefly through Mr. Weil, who had a large stock on hand for the provisioning of the garrison, until the contract terminated at the beginning of February. Since then supplies have been collected from various merchants, storekeepers, and private persons and stored in the Army Service Corps dépôt, and from the original Army Service Corps stocks, of which forage and oats formed a great proportion. Fresh beef is obtained by purchase from a private individual named White, and in a lesser degree from the natives.

"Breadstuffs are obtained, like groceries, by commandeering the stocks of various merchants and private persons."

Lord Roberts now commuted the sentence of the court-martial which tried Lieutenant Murchison for the murder of Mr. Parslow to one of penal servitude for life. Many of those who had been associated with this officer did not consider him responsible for his actions, and were relieved at the lightening of the punishment of a comrade-in-arms.

On the 27th Colonel Baden-Powell sent the following message to Lord Roberts:—

"After two hundred days' siege I desire to bring to your lordship's notice the exceptionally good spirit of loyalty that pervades all

## The Transvaal War

classes of this garrison. The patience of everybody in Mafeking in making the best of things under the long strain of anxiety, hardship, and privation is beyond all praise, and is a revelation to me. The men, half of whom are unaccustomed to the use of arms, have adapted themselves to their duties with the greatest zeal, readiness, and pluck, and the devotion of the women is remarkable. With such a spirit our organisation runs like clockwork, and I have every hope it will pull us successfully through."

At this time, the Boers being more peaceful, the citizens prepared to celebrate the two hundredth day of the siege by horse dinners. Various other mysterious meats, whose origin none dared investigate, appeared on the bill of fare. One lady developed a genius for treating the meat rations, and went so far as to give a dinner-party. Her process was elaborate. The meat ration was cut up and the objectionable pieces removed. It was then soaked



POSTAGE STAMPS ISSUED AT MAFEKING DURING THE SIEGE.

in salt and water for three hours, and made into soup thickened with starch. The next course was the beef out of the soup, served with potato tops, which were found most delectable. Then came a sowans pudding. Sowans proved a failure when served as porridge or curry, but when the preparation was mixed with starch, bicarbonate of soda, and baking powder, people were swift to partake.

In addition to the usual delicacies, minced mule and the afore-said sowan porridge, invented by an ingenious Scottish crofter of the name of Sims, there was now manufactured a curious brawn of horsehide, which was generally sneered at but devoured with alacrity. Curio hunters longed to preserve a slab of it for presentation to the British Museum, but the feat of self-abnegation was too hard to be endured. Besides, as some philosopher said while putting it into a place of safety, it would be the highest horse that was ever exhibited by the time it got there, and the building wouldn't hold it. The community was almost entirely a teetotal one. "Wee drappies" grew so wee as to be almost invisible, and when a case of whisky was raffled for it fetched £107, 10s.!

## Affairs in Rhodesia

On the 29th a military tournament was held, whereat a great display of cheerfulness was affected, to cover the fact that fever, malarial and typhoid, was gaining ground in the hospitals.

### AFFAIRS IN RHODESIA

The Rhodesian troops were now at Moshwana, British Bechuanaland, in camp some thirty miles from Mafeking. The small force with a single serviceable gun could really accomplish little, and it was marvellous, considering its extreme weakness, how it managed to maintain the aggressive at all.

Early in April Colonel Plumer started a pigeon post, and the first pigeon despatched arrived at Mafeking within four hours. The second was not so fortunate, but later on the successful bird was sent off again, on an educational trip, with younger birds in its wake.

On the 22nd Trooper Brindal of the Rhodesian Regiment died of the wounds sustained in the action on the 31st of March. Archdeacon Upcher and Father Hartman returned from the sad mission of discovering and burying the remains of Lieutenant Milligan, who fell at Ramathlabama. The enemy now were being reinforced from time to time by parties from east and south, and as far as could be ascertained by Colonel Plumer, who sent out native runners to apprise him of the doings of the southern relief column, the Boers around Mafeking numbered about 3000.

On the 24th General Carrington's force, consisting of 1100 men, with mounts and transports, arrived at Beira, and proceeded from thence to Marandellas, twenty-five miles from Salisbury, the capital of Rhodesia. The route, the first 200 miles of which is through Portuguese territory, is covered by railway. The distance from Beira to Salisbury is some 375 miles. The Beira railway was carried in 1898 as far as New Umtali, where it was connected with the system of the Mashonaland Railway Company. At Salisbury the railway ceases, and between this point and Bulawayo, the terminus of the Cape Railway, a space of 280 miles needed to be covered by an extension. From Bulawayo all promised to be plain sailing, as, owing to the untiring energies of Colonel Plumer and his small force—whose valuable services have never been sufficiently esteemed—the road and rail to Mafeking had been protected and preserved.

On the 28th, Lieutenant Moorson left Mafeking and reached Colonel Plumer's camp at noon of the 29th, conveying to him the latest intelligence, and helping him to formulate plans for the big project of relief which will be described anon.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SIEGE OF WEPENER

EARLY in April a portion of the Colonial Division, composed of Cape Mounted Rifles, the Royal Scots Mounted Infantry, Driscoll's Scouts, Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles under Captain Price, Brabant's Horse, two 15-pounders, two naval 12-pounders, two 7-pounders, one Hotchkiss, and three Maxims, the whole force under Colonel Dalgety, crossed the Caledon Bridge at Jammersberg Drift, took possession of it as the most important strategical point, and occupied the town of Wepener without opposition. The Colonel had no sooner done so than he was surrounded by Dutchmen, and made aware that he must prepare to stand a siege. A party of Boers accompanying a German officer, who were blindfolded before being brought in, now entered Wepener bearing a message from the commandant. He very kindly demanded the instant surrender of the British to save further bloodshed. The messengers retired without taking with them a reply to the considerate request, but asking whether some mistake had not been made, and inviting their surrender instead. As the Boers were now threatening an attack on the force, Sir G. Lagden demanded a demonstration by the Basutos on the Basuto border. This was readily responded to, for the nation naturally resented any invasion of their territory by their hereditary foes; and, moreover, the chiefs had been vastly impressed by the "big heart" of the Englishmen with whom they had come in contact, and their stubborn resistance of the Boer attacks. Wepener itself was evacuated, but a camp at Jammersberg, three miles off, was formed, entrenchments made, and defences ingeniously constructed. The position, somewhat resembling Ladysmith, was situated in the saucer-shaped hollow of many hills. It was practically isolated, but the lines were strong, and meat was plentiful.

Colonel Dalgety, who commanded the gallant little force, is an old officer of the Cape Mounted Rifles, and has as a record of services the Gaika and Galeka expeditions, and the operations in Basutoland in 1880-81. He had no doubt in his ability to hold out against the besiegers, although the force was only 1700 to 1800 strong, and the position was really too extensive. To protect it properly required about 4000 men. The Cape Mounted Rifles, with a company of

## The Siege of Wepener

Royal Scots, were ordered to hold the left of the position, the weakest point; 1st Brabants and some Kaffrarian Rifles the front; 2nd Brabants the right; and Kaffrarian Rifles the rear.

A stirring day's work was recorded on the 8th by an officer, whose experiences were published in the *Globe*:—

"April 8, 7 A.M.—As I write, with my back against the trench, we have reached the fifth day of the noisy concert without any appreciable result, except that we have expended most of our ammunition. Not a gun has been dismounted, not an inch of our long line of defence (ten miles, about) been yielded to the enemy; but about 150 gallant fellows, mostly gentlemen by birth, of the Colonial Division, are *hors de combat*, and we are still looking and longing to see the relief columns of Kitchener or Gatacre appear on the horizon. . . . While sitting chatting with Captain Cholmondeley, I saw across the ravine my own squadron, 'M,' descending rapidly into the valley to reoccupy the rifle-pits which Ruttledge had vacated at daylight, and exposed to a heavy shrapnel fire. I scrambled down the ridge and joined them at the pits, but had scarcely got my men posted, when Cookson was seen coming towards us at a mad gallop. My orders were to leave one troop (Ruttledge's) in the rifle-pits, and take the other three to support Colonel Dalgety, who was hard pressed on our left rear. I should have to cross a plain swept by the Boer fire.

"When I had climbed up the steep ravine on the top of the main ridge we found all our horses hidden away in a fold of the ground. To mount was the work of a minute, and then we were launched on our mad gallop across a plain swept by Boer Maxim and rifle fire. I led, and the men followed most gallantly into the 'jaws of death.' Nothing but annihilation seemed to await us; but on we swept over that mile and a half like wild men, an excited American, constantly by my side and sometimes ahead of me, shouting, 'In the joy of battle.' It was, I think, the most exciting quarter of an hour I have spent in my adventurous life. My horse was going at racing pace, when suddenly I came upon a kranze, down which I leaped in fox-hunting style. I thought this would finish all my bad riders; but although they tailed off somewhat into a longer line than the open order I had ordered, they were still in the ruck, and we all came together somewhat too closely at a wire fence, which brought us to a standstill. Having negotiated this, we came upon another similar one, which we all got through somehow. All this time the little columns of dust were rising all round and constantly under my horse's belly. Again we were brought up by a deep donga, along which we had to turn to our right and skirt it till it was negotiable, where the banks had been cut down on each side for the horses of the C.M.R. to cross. I made then for a group of dismounted horses held in shelter behind a strong causeway. Here was Dalgety, to whom I reported myself. In a few minutes the Boers brought another gun into position, which sent a shell into us, killing four gun mules linked together in their harness, six troop horses, one of mine, and one nigger, who was holding the mules. They fell in a heap, and presented a most gruesome appearance. One or two men were also wounded by the same shell, which was the signal for a skurry for shelter behind huge boulders. The horses were sent down to the donga before mentioned, where, though sheltered from shot and shell, they spent four miserable days, until at last a heavy rain filled the donga, and some of the horses were swimming. All had had their saddles on from the first day. Some of these had been torn off by the horses' frantic efforts to get out, and

## The Transvaal War

were lost in the mud. Finally they all got out, and covered the plains under the Boer fire. Many of them were shot.

"After the deadly shell I began to count up my men and find out how many were missing after the charge across the plain, and the last dose of shrapnel. To my surprise, they all answered to their names excepting two. Macarthy had been struck full in the forehead by a Mauser bullet, and fell from his horse as one dead. He is now recovering. Reid, an American, was shot through the side and arm, and is also recovering. Turner, my senior lieutenant, had been struck in the hip with a bit of segment shell, but stuck most pluckily to his post."

The officer went on to narrate an episode which deserves to be remembered among the deeds of heroism which distinguished this notable period: "Coming across from the C.M.R. lines towards the Kaffrarian lines was a stretcher carried by four men with a wounded man on it. As soon as it came from under the shelter of the kopje on which we and the C.M.R. live, about 1200 yards from the ridge held by the enemy, opposite the open end of the horse-shoe, it was received by a hail of bullets. On went the gallant bearers for about a hundred yards, when they came to a sudden stand, put the stretcher on the ground, and seemed to consult. First one ran about twenty yards, to fall, apparently shot dead; then another did the same, and the third; and the three corpses were lying on the ground. The fourth man fell on his knees between the stretcher and the enemy. The Boers, then satisfied that they had disposed of this lot, ceased firing at them for the space of some minutes, when suddenly the four dead men came to life, rushed to the stretcher, and went on with it at the double, though little columns of dust rose thicker than ever round the devoted bearers. When they had crossed the fire zone and came under the shelter of a small kopje, something very like a cheer rose from the three hundred spectators of this exciting scene. Putting the breach of the Geneva Convention out of the question, there could not be a better exemplification of the savagery of the Boers. Even a savage foe would have respected such courage as these men showed in their efforts to save their wounded comrade. The wounded man turned out to be Captain Goldsworthy of the C.M.R., wounded in two places, whom I afterwards saw in hospital here, and the one who shielded him with his own body was a young trumpeter in the C.M.R., who, I believe, will get the V.C."

On the 8th a commando some 2000 strong, with four guns, laagered five miles out in the direction of Dewetsdorp. and on the 9th the town of Wepener was occupied by the Boers, who, in number from 5000 to 6000, spread themselves crescentwise around the British position. Not long were they inactive. Their guns began to open on the camp, and received a prompt answer from the



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# **MOUNTED INFANTRY**

Photo by Gregory & Co., London

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## The Siege of Wepener

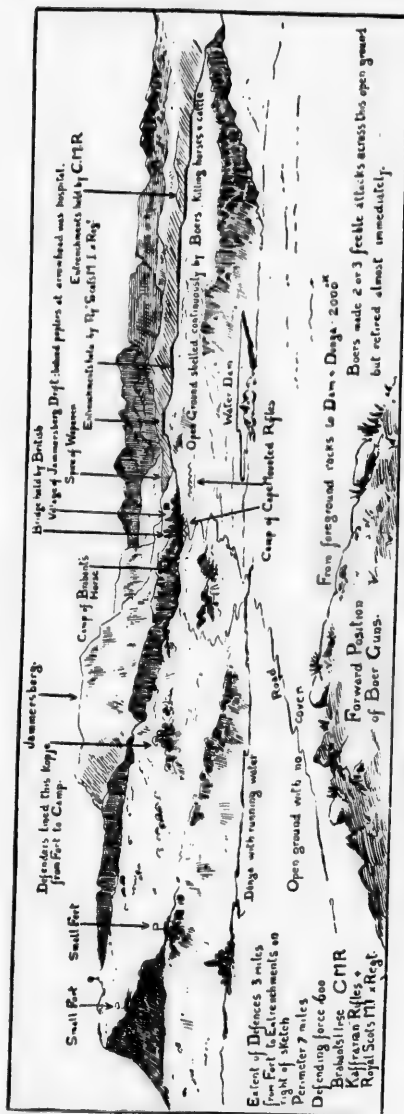
15-pounders. A vigorous artillery duel, involving great loss to the besieged, was then kept up throughout the day.

A member of the stalwart band gave his impressions of the first days of the fighting: "The brave lot of fellows of the C.M.R. were stormed at until we almost gave up hope that any human being could stand against it; but very fortunately for us they did so, and although the Boers came almost behind them and enfiladed their trenches, killing and wounding between sixty and seventy of the regiment. Goodness knows how many of the Boers were killed. Their losses must have been great, no matter what they may say afterwards. Towards daylight the enemy retired to their former position, and at daybreak the fight went merrily on its way, but, luckily, shifted from the poor played-out C.M.R. for a few hours. Major Sprenger, poor fellow, was simply riddled with bullets. Captain Goldsworthy and Major Waring, together with several other officers, were wounded, and now the C.M.R. are commanded by only a few officers, including their most gallant Colonel Dalgety. Captain Cookson, another of their officers, is an especial favourite with our men, as he looks after them as well as his own men in action. He fears no dangers, and so instils confidence into others.

"All went well with us until the good-night shell, which bursts over our camp about six o'clock each night, arrived. Cookson and I were superintending the sending of the food to the trenches, where our brave men were so bravely holding their own, when I heard the whistle of the shell and heard it burst, and simultaneously was knocked down by a shrapnel bullet, which, fortunately for yours truly, did not penetrate far into my thigh. As no bones were broken, I hope—in fact, I am sure—I shall be able to walk in a day or two from now. Lieutenant Duncan, also wounded in the leg, and myself were placed in a small schanze, erected for the purpose, but as there was no roof to it, and the rain poured for hours during the night, we were soaked to the bone. It could not be helped, there being no other place in which to put us; so we did not complain. It was just as well we did not go to the hospital, which is already overcrowded—no fewer than 110 wounded men there—as I learn that one of our wounded men was yesterday killed in it with a Boer bullet; in fact, the Boers several times fired at it. We now have a waggon sail over our schanze, and feel nice and comfortable. We expect to be able to move about by Easter Sunday. Captain Hamilton has been very kind; comes to visit us two or three times a day, and runs a strong chance of being shot, as the snipers shoot at every one who shows himself. He is only one of the lot; they are all the same."

On Tuesday, the 10th, came more duelling. In the morning with artillery, in the afternoon with rifles. The Cape Mounted

## The Transvaal War



THE DEFENCE OF WEPENER. (From a Sketch by Major A. Festing.)

Rifles did good execution, for the Boers who had approached to 250 yards of their position were forced to remove. An officer of Brabant's Horse spoke most enthusiastically of the C.M.R. He said:—

"We fought all day and all night. The big gun and rifle fire were almost deafening, and as we are entirely surrounded, it was pouring in on all sides, a continuous hail of shot and shell. Towards afternoon they directed all their gun fire to one spot, and blew to bits the schanzes of the C.M.R., thus leaving them almost unprotected, and in the night they attempted to take the position by assault. Although the C.M.R. were very considerably outnumbered, the Boers were unable to attain their object. They had not reckoned on the opposition of, undoubtedly, one of the finest regiments in the whole world, as the C.M.R. are. We (1st Brabant's) were unable to send reinforcements to the gallant fellows, as we expected an attack ourselves at any moment, and our position is such an extended one, that it required every man to hold it. If only we had a few hundreds more to hold the trenches with us, and an ample supply of ammunition, we would be quite happy."

## The Siege of Wepener

The scarcity of ammunition began to cause anxiety, and also the condition of the atmosphere. The air was almost unbreathable. Fumes from dead horses, cows, pigs, which were strewed on the surrounding plains, rose in sunshine or rain as from a caldron of pestilence. There was no avoiding them, and death by worse than shot and shell—by slow ravaging malaria, or greedy epidemic—seemed to be traced by the finger of expectation across the foul atmosphere. No longer was there pleasure in gazing out at the beautiful green hills, that but a little while ago had been speckled with white tents and draped with the ethereal gossamer of blue smoke from the fitful flame of the camp fires. War had sounded its most discordant note—hard—emphatic. The tents were all struck. On the ground they lay prone, battered by the pouring rain. Camp fires were now few and far between, and the only smoke to be seen came from the snorting nozzles of implements of death. The rattle of musketry made the melody of day and night. The men, huddled up in their trenches, rained on by heaven-sent storm, rained on by hell-sent shrapnel, unable to raise a head lest the movement would be their last, still remained glorious fellows, cheery, jocose, hailing the humours of their tragic position with shouts of laughter, and skipping, with true heroism, the ghastly and the terrible that thrust itself between them and their courage.

One of their number described the trenches as "simply ordinary trenches dug in the ground, with the earth and stones thrown out on the front side, strengthened by sand-bags. During the first day's fighting they were not very good, and the heavy losses sustained were attributable to that fact. The men improved them during the night, however, and they grew and grew until they were really like rabbits burrowing into the ground. During the shelling men would sit or lie down under the bank, and it was wonderful how the trenches protected them. Some of the trenches had hundreds of shells fired into them during the day, and as long as the men kept well down, they got off comparatively lightly. It was a fearful strain, however, as you might be crouching behind a traverse of sand-bags, when thump would come a shell and knock the sand-bags all over the place, upon which you would have to skip into the traverse and expose yourself while doing so to a hail of bullets from the Boer snipers. As the Boers were all round us, they brought guns to bear from different points, so as to enfilade the trenches, so we had to build transverse walls, sand-bags, or traverses to protect ourselves. The front Cape Mounted Rifles' trenches were fearfully battered during the day, and the tired men had to patch them up as best they could during the night. During the day we could not show our heads over the parapets, as there would immediately come a volley from the Boer riflemen."

## The Transvaal War

All the troops had unceasing work, but most of the casualties fell to the share of those in the southern position—the Cape Mounted Rifles, Captain Garner's Squadron of Brabant's Horse, Captain Seel's Company of Royal Scots Mounted Infantry, and Driscoll's energetic scouts. The Kaffrarians, commanded by Captain Price elsewhere in four different positions to east and west—took their share of the defence, while on the heights north-east and north-west, the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Brabant's Horse, under Major Henderson and Colonel Grenfell respectively, also worked incessantly to protect the garrison.

The object of the concentration of the Boers around this region was supposed to be connected with offering opposition to General Brabant's advance, but the Dutchmen in their policy were somewhat uneasy, owing to their close proximity to the Basuto border.

Their alarm was not without reason, for if there was a force eager to attack them it was the Basutos, and these were only held back from rushing into the fray by the personal influence of Sir Godfrey Lagden and his British colleagues, who can never sufficiently be applauded for the skill and diplomacy with which they managed to keep, by invisible moral coercion, a fiery horde from rushing over the borders and possibly massacring such Free Staters as came in their way. The Boers, however, were not conscious of this coercion, and consequently their action around Wepener was somewhat cramped, and thus it was that the little community managed to defy them. Meanwhile discomforts were many, and the clouds often emptied themselves like a vast shower-bath involving doused trenches, drenched clothing, and the suspension of operations. On the 11th a cheery message was received from Lord Kitchener, who paid a visit to Aliwal North, and from thence sent word that he hoped "for an early change" in the circumstances of the besieged. Spirits rose. What Kitchener, the adamantine, said was sure to be done. On Thursday, 12th, the fourth day of fierce fighting, the Boers continued their aggression all day. During the contest an entertaining interlude in the drama of warfare took place. The enemy was busy shelling one of the garrison's 15-pounders, when a shot knocked off the left sight of Captain Lukin's gun. The Captain, generous in his admiration, jumped on top of the gun and made a complimentary salaam to the Boer gunner. Later on, by using the reserve sight on the right side, he himself planked a shell right into the adversary's gunpit, whereupon the officer in charge, imitating Captain Lukin's example, promptly leapt up and bowed his congratulations!

During the night of the 12th the Dutchmen attempted another attack, but volley after volley was poured into them with such animation that by 4 A.M. they were glad enough to retire. Fortu-

## The Siege of Wepener

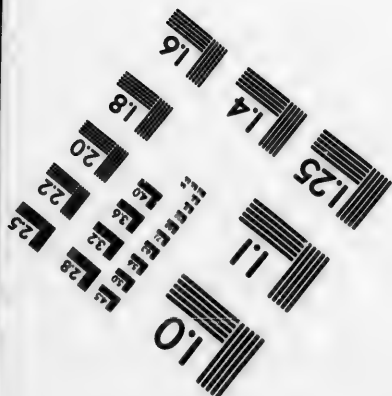
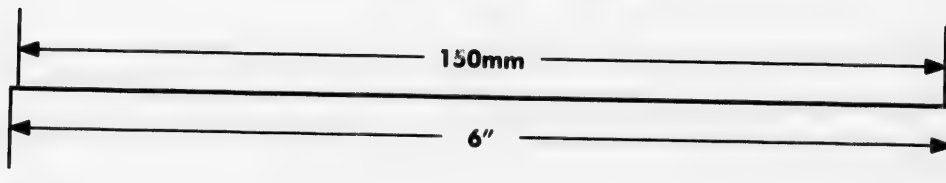
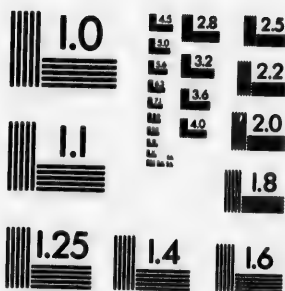
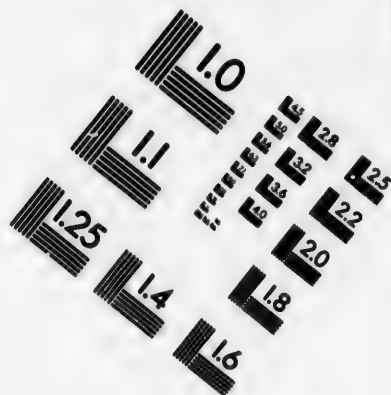
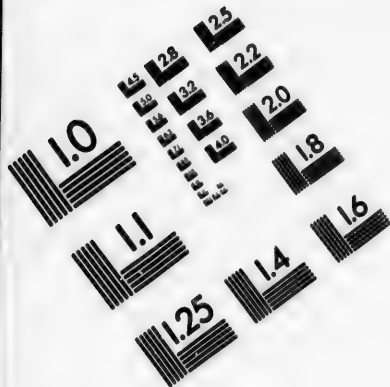
nately not a man was killed or wounded, and those who had so well defended themselves felt a somewhat natural satisfaction in seeing the Boer ambulances at work the next morning. Soon it was rumoured that the Boers were bringing up another gun, and the garrison, who were beginning to get tired of being peppered at by guns big and small, began to long for the arrival of reinforcements.

Friday the 13th, the following Saturday and Sunday, were used by the Boers for their Easter devotions—not that they were too devout to enjoy a little sniping in the intervals. Nasal hymns took the place of the snorts of Long Tom, but after the reiterations of the Vickers Maxim the Federals resumed their bombardment with renewed zest, and Oom Sam, the British howitzer, took up the tune. Unfortunately, the Dutchmen resorted to expansive bullets. One of the commandants tried to assert that these were captured from the British, but truth not being the Boer forte, no effort was made to refute the vile impeachment.

The garrison next made a dashing sortie and captured a Boer gun. Aggressive action was necessary. Reinforcements were daily reaching the besiegers, and hostile gangs were collecting in the vicinity of Dewetsdorp. These soon gathered round the plucky British force, which, to protect itself, launched out with such vigour that the Boers, especially the Zastrom Commando, who had assaulted to a jubilate, retreated to a dirge. The women wept, and the men themselves grew anxious, for the Basutos, warlike and excited, were massing on the border, and a sword of Damocles, in the form of an exasperated legion of natives, threatened to drop on the Dutchmen's heads. They were getting into difficulties on all sides. One of Olivier's guns was smashed, and another had been captured in the sortie by the Cape Mounted Rifles. But the energies of this sprightly corps had also cost them dear. During the four days' fighting, from the 9th to the 13th, eighteen were slain and 132 wounded! The men on the south-western fringe fared worse even than the others. They feared to cook in their trenches lest they should attract the Boer fire, and meals brought from adjacent shelters were cold before they could reach them. Such reviving and inspiring refreshment as hot tea or coffee was almost unknown, and as a natural consequence, particularly in such damp weather, warmth external and internal was most craved for and very generally missed. Washing was a luxury not to be thought of, indeed, a rain bath in a trench had to serve all purposes. The strain of such conditions on the men was most trying, and the account given by one of the officers was far from exaggerated. "They had to go into their trenches on the night of the 8th, and from then till the 25th they had to stay in them, crouching in them all day while being heavily shelled and 'sniped' at by the enemy's riflemen. During



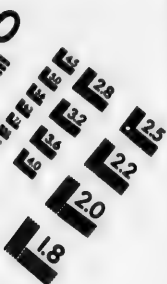
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the night a couple of men from each trench would be sent to the place near the centre of the position where the food was prepared and take it up to their comrades. Cooking could only be done at night in dongas, and behind cover, such as walls, &c., and by the time the food got to the men it was ice cold, so the poor fellows, or the majority, in the forward trenches did not get anything hot in the shape of food or drink for eighteen days. Night was a blessed relief, as they could get out of the trenches and stretch themselves, but to cap our misery we had several days' heavy rain, and the trenches got full of water. The fellows had to bale it out with buckets, patrol tins, and even hats, I believe. Those rainy nights were awful, and the men were getting quite 'jumpy.' I really thought some of them would lose their reason, and was quite prepared to find some dead from exposure in the morning. However, the rain stopped in time, otherwise we would have been in great danger as the men could not have stood it. There is a limit to human endurance."

The investment had no showy nor picturesque characteristics: it was just a case of stern resistance, of obdurate endurance, that was infinitely more exigent in its demands on the human character than the brilliant soul-stirring deeds of open battle. Fortunately the Boers were getting correspondingly uncomfortable. They had surrounded Wepener, it is true, but, with a native guard of some 3000 strong assembled to prevent any encroachments on the Basuto-land border, they remained where they were at their peril, and every hour brought with it the chance of being hemmed in on all sides. Yet they stuck on, inspired with the belief that by some, for them, lucky chance Colonel Dalgety might drop into their hands. Meanwhile the natives were assisting the besieged to the best of their power, and the resident Commissioner at Mafeteng was exerting himself to provide ambulances and medical stores, in hope of being able to forward them should opportunity offer. The charitable arrangement was much appreciated, for the state of affairs was far from salubrious. Apart from sick and wounded, many of the Boers, after the night attack of the 12th, had left their comrades unburied, and the bodies were still lying in the mill furrow, to the distress of those shut up within the narrow confines of the camp. The Caledon River now rose and added to the alarm of the Federals, who were aware that if it should become in flood they would undoubtedly be cut off. At the same time those within the besieged area were also beginning to get additionally concerned. Ammunition for the howitzer was running low, and the rifle ammunition promised to hold out but for a very limited period. Messages were continually being received from Lord Roberts, who heliographed *via* Mafeteng congratulating

## The Siege of Wepener

the troops on their brave defence, and assuring them that he was keeping a watchful eye on them. This should have been consoling, but every hour, every instant, was now of importance. Still there was no lack of pluck. These men who had beaten the Boers three times were confident that they would make a good fight of it to the last. "We'll not surrender till half of us are killed," they said, and the gallant fellows, in their trenches, under a storm of shot and shell, pursued their games of cards as though they meant to "sit tight till Doomsday." Of them an officer writing at this time said: "The defence, so far, has been heroic. In the Crimea twenty-four hours on and twenty-four hours off was considered hard work. My men have been ten days in the trenches without leaving them, wet to the skin oftener than not, and day and night exposed to shrapnel, not able to raise their hand above without getting a bullet through them, and yet not a grumble is heard. As I sit scrawling this in pencil, with my back against the damp earth, the jest goes round, and peals of laughter follow the sallies of your light-hearted countrymen from the Emerald Isle. I positively love these men, and shall never forget, in spite of theague attacks and the racked head, the enjoyment of these hours spent packed, all arms and legs, in the mass of humanity which fills these trenches—the work of our own hands."

They had tasted neither bread nor biscuits for a week. Fortunately they had meat in plenty, and occasionally certain meal-cakes which, though filling, brought about a sensation graphically described as "hippopotamus on the chest." Some one declared they were quite as hard and nearly as damaging as Boer bullets!

In spite, however, of their assumed jocosity they could not but be cognisant of the fact that, what with damp and dysentery, irregular meals, tainted water, poor medical appliances, and indifferent stores, the future was threatening. Questions as to the coming of the promised relief began to be anxiously bandied about, and now and again a terrible doubt crept in that it might never come at all.

Easter Monday they thought of as Bank Holiday in England. They pictured the gay Cockney multitude scampering free in parks and sunshine while they, huddled together in a deluge of perpetual rain, were wondering if life in trenches was worth living. Then some one, a philosopher, declared you couldn't get a daily rain-water bath at home for love or money, and they laughingly made the best of it. They wallowed in damp and mud, and counted on their fingers that there had been eight days of hard fighting, and wondered how many more they were good for. Books were scarce and conversation monotonous. "Any signs of Brabant or Gatacre?" some one would question. "None. I guess they've got lost some-

## The Transvaal War

where." "Any chance of the rain stopping?" "None. We shall have deluges to-morrow." So passed the time between Job and his comforters.

Fighting proceeded wearily, spasmodically. The Boers too were damp, in spirit and in body, and the carols of Long Tom lost some of their demoniac mirth. Now and then the besiegers would smarten themselves up with a volley, occasionally they would snipe intermittently—a little venomous spitting at the obdurate, sturdy, magnificent fellows they had learned as much to respect as to detest. Still no relief column. Hoping, the men in their trenches puzzled and offered solutions for themselves.

"Perhaps the relievers had fallen into a trap," said a pessimist.

"Oh no; the rain must have delayed them," said some one more cheery.

"Perhaps the drifts are unpassable," volunteered a third.

"I wonder if any of us will be left to receive them?" questioned the pessimist.

"Poof! only ten per cent. of us are disabled as yet!" chaffed the optimist lightly.

Though they did not know it, General Chermiside, with the Third Division, had now marched about eight miles east of Reddersburg, and encamped in the locality where the Royal Irish Rifles surrendered. On the 19th a large body of the enemy was moving on with the apparent object of encountering General Brabant near Rouxville, and later on from the distance the muffled roar of musketry gave promise of the relieving action. Naturally, the spirits of the garrison began to rise, but their joy was short lived, for soon the Boer appeared on the west, and there brought five guns to bear on the British force. All day the round lips of the new visitors opened and hooted and spat! The Kaffrarian Rifles were treated to no less than 130 shrapnel shells. Brabant's regiment and the Maxim kept up an active fire on the Boer gunners; but the guns were so cautiously protected that their efforts were crowned with small success. Even the redoubtable Captain Lukin failed to make his usual impression, for this officer had now decided that economy—economy of ammunition—must make the better part of Wepener valour. Major Maxwell, at dusk, with his cheery sappers, set to work to remedy the ravages of the day, but the prospect of affairs was not rendered more heartening by information which came in to the effect that Olivier, De Wet, Froneman, and others were closing in with their commandoes and mercenaries, numbering some 8000, from Rouxville, Smithfield, Ficksburg, and even from Ladybrand. This discovery caused no little anxiety. All were aware that Lord Roberts could and would come to their relief; but, nevertheless, it was impossible to ignore the fact that

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LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR H. M. LESLIE-RUNDLE, K.C.B.

Photo by Russell & Sons, London

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## The Siege of Wepener

provisions began to dwindle and the poor trek oxen began to go, and no signs of a relieving column were evident. The officers and men were now on duty all night in the trenches—melancholy work, for deluges of rain made them sopping, and served to damp even the bellicose ardour of the most valorous.

Their position by day, too, was pathetic in the extreme. It was impossible even for the most rollicking and dauntless to look unmoved to right or to left of him. Perhaps on one side he would be bounded by a "pal" doubled up and sweating with the agony of his wounds, while on the other would lie, clay-cold and immobile—with that unmistakable stiffness that they had learnt to know too well—a form that some moments before had been vibrant with humanity. In this *entourage* it was necessary throughout the long hours to keep up persistent fire at the enemy, and dodge and manœuvre so that the fate that loomed large and unforgettable on either hand might be kept at bay! Few indeed were in possession of a whole skin in these times—they fought, got wounded, went into hospital, came out partially healed and fought again, only to go back with fresh holes for repair. Sometimes they were carried to the churchyard by comrades of their corps—gaunt, weary, aching, grimy fellows with large hearts, who grimly professed to envy those—many there were by now—who had "every night in bed!"

On the evening of the 23rd there was some jubilation in Jammersberg camp. General Brabant heliographed from a place some fourteen miles distant, reporting an engagement with the enemy, and that they were retiring, though there was a strong force on his left flank. Heavy firing continued to be heard all day, most probably from the artillery of Generals Rundle and Chermiside, who, at this time, were approaching Dewetsdorp from the south, or of Generals French and Pole-Carew, who were nearing that destination from the north. The plot was thickening. The sun was shining, the guns were going, and there was a chance the Boers might yet be hoist with their own petard, and in expectation thereof a veritable thrill passed through the camp.

Then the Boer fire began to slacken perceptibly, the barking of big guns mysteriously subsided. What was happening? Anxiety and suspense made the young faces—faces that had been young at the commencement of the war—still more drawn and haggard; it was felt that should the Boers capture the position they would give little quarter to the Colonial Division, and these had determined never to hoist the white flag. The fact was, the Boers were silently preparing to sneak away. They had heard of the converging of the British armies, they were in receipt of information regarding a grand scheme for mopping them up, and after taking a last sullen, despairing lunge they took themselves off.

## The Transvaal War

On the morning of the 25th a serpentine *cortège* of waggons and carts and riders was seen winding its way in the direction of Ladybrand. Colonel Dalgety half suspected that Brabant's force would presently appear and chase this retreating company, and got himself and some 300 of his men in readiness to assist in harassing those who so recently had harassed him. But Brabant's force was apparently worn out, and was about some fourteen miles off when the retirement commenced, and though to his splendid exertions the



WEPENER.

retreat was due, it was evident that the enemy would manage to slide off without chastisement.

Thus ended the story of a grand achievement, an almost unique example in the way of defence of fortified positions, 1700 men having for seventeen days and nights in the trenches defended seven miles of entrenchment without giving up a single position! By the end there had been about 200 casualties, and only 1500 men were left to defend the tremendous length of entrenchments. One of the valiant defenders gave a graphic summary of the continuous fighting :—

"We lost between twenty and thirty killed and wounded the first day—not very many, considering what we had against us. At night the big guns ceased fire, and there was only a shot now and again during the night. On Tuesday morning at breakfast time the big guns started again; but there were only



## The Siege of Wepener

five guns that day, and we found out after the fight that we had knocked out three of the Boer guns on the previous day. The firing on the Tuesday was not so brisk, but at 8 P.M. the Boers attacked in force at the C.M.R. trenches, but our men were ready for them, and played one of the Boers' own games with them. They saw them coming, and the Royal Scots lined up on one side and the C.M.R. on the other side of the spruit. Our men allowed them to get right in and then opened fire at fifty yards. Every man had his bayonet fixed and ready, and at the word they went for them. In less than an hour it was all over, and the Boers were beaten back, leaving 300 dead. It was pitiful to hear them crying. They have not the heart of a school-girl, and they cannot stand a beating. After the Tuesday night the enemy kept very quiet for a few days, only independent firing going on both with rifles and big guns. This went on for several days, at times a little brisk, and then the Boers seemed to get tired and tried to rush us again with 2000 men. This was on the fifteenth day at ten in the morning. By twelve o'clock we had them beaten, and the next day they left us and we came on up here."

A great deal of the success of the resistance was due to the ingenuity of the entrenchments. The work had been carried out under the direction of Colonel Maxwell, R.E., and the splendid stand made by the besieged was made possible almost entirely by his genius. Captain Lukin was also a tower of strength, and but for his services with the guns the garrison would have suffered much more than it did. Captain Grant, C.M.R., too, was invaluable, working late and early, and carrying out with immense zeal the plans of the chief, while Colonel Grenfell was an untiring right-hand man to Colonel Dalgety.

Another of the heroes of the siege was Major Sprenger, of the C.M.R., who fell in his country's service almost at the beginning of the siege. He was a born soldier, and a distinguished member of a distinguished corps. He won his commission by his smartness and soldierly qualities, having risen to the rank of sub-inspector in the old F.A.M.P. On the merging of that corps into the C.M.R., he continued as lieutenant, and was awarded the next step for gallantry in the field, he being the first to mount the scaling ladders in the storming of Moirosi's Mountain.

General Brabant afterwards described the Cape Mounted Rifles as being the very finest corps in her Majesty's service, and recommended them to the notice of Lord Roberts. As for the artillery under Captain Lukin, the General said he did not think there was a battery in her Majesty's service that could excel it.

The casualties at Wepener from April 9th to 18th were:—

*Killed*:—Cape Mounted Rifles—Major Sprenger, Lieutenant E. A. Taplin. Brabant's Horse—Lieutenant Tharston. *Severely wounded*:—Cape Mounted Rifles—Major J. C. Warring, Lieutenant J. Heilford, Lieutenant L. Martin, Lieutenant R. Ayre, Lieutenant W. H. Nixon, Lieutenant H. G. F. Campbell. Brabant's Horse—Lieutenant W. J. Holford. Driscoll's Scouts—Lieutenant W. Weiner. Kaffrarian Rifles—Lieutenant C. Lister. *Slightly wounded*:—

# The Transvaal War

Cape Mounted Rifles—Captain C. L. M. Goldsworthy. Brabant's Horse—Surgeon-Captain L. C. Perkins (returned to duty), Lieutenant Turner Duncan, Lieutenant and Quartermaster P. Williams. 1st Royal Scots Mounted Infantry—Lieutenant C. G. Hill (1st Berks Regiment, attached).

The total losses were 33 killed and 132 wounded—a somewhat heavy bill for so small a force, when it is remembered that many of the wounded did not report their injuries but remained on duty during the siege.

In his diary the officer before quoted wrote: "We were relieved to-day at last, and march to-morrow. We have gone through an awful time, and some of the men look quite ghastly. They dragged their wasted forms from the trenches to-day at a crawl to the camp, which had been repitched. I had to give up the night before last, and after visiting my sentries, got back into the trenches in agony. At midnight I reached the hospital, where they injected morphine, and, after twenty-four hours lying on a stretcher, I am on my legs again. . . . Seventeen days and nights under fire, and the disgusting part of the whole is that it has been in vain. The Boers have slipped through our fingers after all."

The relief of Wepener may be said to have taken place on the 25th. To discover how this was automatically accomplished, it is necessary to follow Lord Roberts's strategic plan, and to return to the events of the 22nd of April.

## OPERATIONS FOR RELIEF

As a continual reorganisation of the forces was taking place, it will assist us, before going further, to examine a rough table of the date, as compiled from various authorities by the *Morning Post* :—

## DISTRIBUTION OF FORCES

*Commanding-in-chief*—FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS.

### THIRD DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. G. CHERMSIDE.  
22nd Brigade (Major-General R. E. Allen).  
2nd Royal Irish Rifles.  
2nd Northumberland Fusiliers.  
1st Royal Scots.  
1st Derbyshire.  
23rd Brigade (Major-General W. G. Knox).  
(Composition not known.)  
74th, 77th, and 79th Field Batteries.

2nd Bedfordshire.  
2nd Wiltshire.  
1st Royal Irish Regiment.  
13th Brigade (Major-General A. G. Wavell).  
2nd East Kent.  
1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry.  
1st West Riding.  
2nd Gloucester.  
76th, 81st, and 82nd Field Batteries.  
38th Company Royal Engineers.

### SIXTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General T. KELLY-KENNY.  
12th Brigade (Major-General Clements).  
2nd Worcestershire.

### SEVENTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General G. TUCKER.  
14th Brigade (Major-General J. G. Maxwell).  
2nd Norfolk.  
2nd Lincoln.

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**SCOUT—6th DRAGOON GUARDS**

(Carabineers)

Photo by (Regent & Co., London)



# Operations for Relief

1st King's Own Scottish Borderers.  
2nd Hanis.

15th Brigade (Major-General C. E. Knox).  
2nd Cheshire.  
1st East Lancashire.  
2nd South Wales Borderers.  
2nd North Stafford.  
83rd, 84th, and 85th Field Batteries.  
9th Company Royal Engineers.

## EIGHTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. M. L. RUNDLE.

16th Brigade  
(Major-General B. B. D. Campbell).  
2nd Grenadier Guards.  
2nd Scots Guards.  
2nd East Yorks.

17th Brigade (Major-General J. E. Boyes).  
1st Worcester.  
2nd Royal West Kent.  
1st South Stafford.  
2nd Manchester.  
Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery.  
5th Company Royal Engineers.

## NINTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. E. COLVILLE.

3rd Brigade  
(Major-General H. A. MacDonald).  
1st Argyll and Sutherland.  
1st Gordon Highlanders.  
2nd Seaforth Highlanders.  
2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch).

19th Brigade  
(Major-General H. L. Smith-Dorrien).  
(Composition not certainly known.)  
Highland Light Infantry.  
2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.  
2nd Shropshire Light Infantry.  
Canadian Regiment.  
Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery.

## TENTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. HUNTER.

5th Brigade (Major-General A. Fitzroy Hart).  
2nd Somerset Light Infantry.  
1st Connaught Rangers.  
1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers.  
1st Border.

6th Brigade (Major-General G. Barton).  
2nd Royal Fusiliers.  
2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers.  
1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers.  
2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers.  
63rd, 64th, and 73rd Field Batteries.

## ELEVENTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General R. POLE-CAREW.

18th Brigade  
(Major-General T. E. Stephenson).  
(Composition not certainly known.)

1st Essex.  
1st Yorkshire.  
1st Welsh.  
2nd Royal Warwickshire.

1st Brigade  
(Major-General Inigo R. Jones).  
3rd Grenadier Guards.  
1st Coldstream Guards.  
2nd Coldstream Guards.  
1st Scots Guards.  
18th, 62nd, 75th Field Batteries.

## CAVALRY DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General J. D. P. FRENCH.

1st Brigade (Brigadier-General T. C. Porter).  
6th Dragoon Guards.  
6th Dragoons.  
2nd Dragoons.

2nd Brigade  
(Brigadier-General R. G. Broadwood).  
10th Hussars.  
12th Hussars.  
Household Cavalry.

3rd Brigade  
(Brigadier-General J. R. P. Gordon).  
9th Lancers.  
16th Lancers.  
17th Lancers.

4th Brigade  
(Major-General J. B. B. Dickson).  
7th Dragoon Guards.  
8th Hussars.  
14th Hussars.  
G, J, M, O, P, Q, R, T, U Batteries Horse Artillery.

## MOUNTED INFANTRY DIVISION.

Major-General IAN HAMILTON.

1st Brigade  
(Major-General E. T. H. Hutton).  
1st Corps (Colonel E. A. H. Alderson).  
1st Canadian Mounted Rifles.  
2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles.  
Lord Strathcona's Corps.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.  
2nd Corps (Colonel de Lisle).  
New South Wales Mounted Infantry.  
West Australian Mounted Infantry.

# The Transvaal War

3rd Corps (Colonel T. D. Pilcher).  
Queensland Mounted Infantry.  
New Zealand Mounted Infantry.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.

4th Corps (Colonel Henry).  
Victorian Mounted Infantry.  
South Australian Mounted Infantry.  
Tasmanian Mounted Infantry.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.  
2nd Brigade (Major-General Ridley).  
South African Irregulars Mounted Infantry.  
Several Batteries Artillery.

## COLONIAL DIVISION.

Major-General BRABANT.

Cape Mounted Rifles.  
Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles.  
Montmorency's Scouts (200).  
Brabant's Horse (1200).  
Border Horse  
Frontier Mounted Rifles.  
Queenstown Volunteers.  
Cape Garrison Artillery.  
Two Naval 12-pounders.

## OTHER TROOPS WITH LORD ROBERTS.

21st Brigade.  
Battalions not known.  
(Brigades not known.)  
2nd Berkshire.  
1st Royal Sussex.  
1st Suffolk.  
1st Cameron Highlanders.  
C.I.V. Infantry.  
Roberts's Horse.  
Kitchener's Horse.  
Two Squadrons Imperial Light Horse.  
7th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
C.I.V. Mounted Infantry.  
Ceylon Mounted Infantry.  
Lumsden's Horse.  
Lord Loch's Horse.  
43rd, 65th, 86th, and 87th Howitzer Batteries.  
2nd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 17th, 38th, 39th, 68th, and  
88th Field Batteries. (Parts of 8th, 9th,  
and 11th Divisions.)  
Four naval 4.7-in. guns.  
Part of Siege Train.

Towards the end of April the authorities found that the situation was growing in interest as in difficulty. In the south-east of the Free State Colonel Dalgety and his small but truculent band had become the pivot round which British and Free Staters were manœuvring, and the red drama of war on the north and west of Wepener was becoming tragic as that of the region around Mafeking. Developments on a large and complicated scale were taking place, but for the purpose of catching the enemy in the northern and eastern portion of the Free State, and dealing with as much of him as possible before proceeding to larger things. There were now several separate columns on the march, each and all so arranged that, at a given moment and at a given place within a very short time they could concentrate for purposes of battle when battle should be imminent, and with a view to mopping up such Boer commandos as might chance to step in between the fangs of the British lion. (We are already aware that the Boer commandos in this region were far too knowing, and the anxious fangs eventually snapped on nothing at all! Still a vast mass of the foe was he'd in the south-east of the Free State while plans for the great advance northwards were being elaborated.)

Lord Roberts began the second act of his campaign by deploying the army from Karee Siding as far as Wepener, a distance of some seventy miles. Indeed, on Sunday the 22nd of April, we find that one portion of the army was at Bushman's Kop, south of

## Operations for Relief

Wepener, another was near Dewetsdorp, half-way between the latter place and Bloemfontein, another was moving to Tweede Geluk, some twenty miles from Bloemfontein and twenty-two from Dewetsdorp, and already in communication with General Rundle, who was making for Dewetsdorp, while troops were also at or near Sanna's Post and fifteen miles west—at Kranz Kraal, a valuable passage of the Modder between Sanna's Post and the railways which for some weeks had been much used by the Boers. All these troops were sprayed out at distances varying from twenty to thirty miles from each other, and were capable of getting into heliographic communication. As this somewhat complicated machinery requires to be examined and not dismissed with a word, it is better, if possible, to follow the commanding officers as they each moved on his special duty.

Generals Rundle and Chermide had concentrated their divisions at Reddersburg with a view to assisting in what was called "the big partridge drive." The force of the united commanders moving from Reddersburg towards Dewetsdorp was now about 15,000 strong. It was composed of the 4th and 7th Imperial Yeomanry, the Mounted Infantry companies of the 1st Berkshire and 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, sixty of Montmorency's Scouts (Captain McNeil), General Campbell's Brigade, General Boyes's Brigade, and General Allen's Brigade. The united artillery was commanded by Colonel Jeffreys, R.A. It comprised the 38th, 69th, 74th, 77th, and 79th Field Batteries. The Boers, disposed by De Wet, occupied a position astride the country from Leeuw Kop to Wepener, those in the former place covering those in the latter, and *vice versa*.

About the 20th the troops, under Sir Leslie Rundle, were approaching Dewetsdorp, keeping the Boers in a perpetual state of anxiety and disturbance by worrying tactics which the Dutchmen were at a loss to understand. "The idea is to keep 'em on the dance where they are," said a Tommy who affected an interest in strategy, "keep 'em lively, so that when they want to run they've no legs to do it with." At the same time the Boers took their share in contributing to the life of the proceedings, and were also the means of bringing to light more deeds of British heroism. Early in the morning of the 20th a strong force of Yeomanry, with Mounted Infantry and two guns, had started out over the green pastures of the Free State to reconnoitre the enemy's left and discover his strength. (The left was the most vulnerable point of the foe, as, that turned, he would be cut off from Wepener and forced north into the arms of the advancing troops.) They soon came upon the main Boer position, and were assailed with a sharp fire from the Dutchmen. A smart encounter, or rather a series of encounters

## The Transvaal War

took place, during which the Yeomanry displayed remarkable steadiness under fire, and executed their share of the movements with the promptness and dexterity of seasoned—Mr. Kipling calls it "salted"—troops.

McNeil's Scouts (late poor De Montmorency's), always the first to be "in it," observed a party of Boers racing for a desirable kopje, and obtained permission to try and cut them off. With the party was Mr. Winston Churchill, who, thinking that fun was in the air, put spurs to his horse and was off with the intrepid band of scouts. For some time there was an animated race, the Boers being nearer to the strong eminence than the British, though less well mounted. When it came to climbing, it seemed as though they might get the worst of it. Rush—rush—rush went the fifty scouts; scamper—scamper—scamper went the foe. It was almost a neck-and-neck affair, when suddenly there came wire, and before this could be cut there were Boers in possession of the great kopje, Boers blazing downwards as fast as muskets would allow. Thereupon Captain McNeil shouted his orders: "Too late! back to the other kopje. Gallop!" and all obeying, the good steeds were off as hard as legs could carry them. And now happened the episode which singles out the reconnaissance from numerous military undertakings of the same kind, for it brought into notice another of the heroes of the war, whose courageous act will not easily be forgotten. As before said, Mr. Winston Churchill, the correspondent of the *Morning Post*, who, it may be remembered, escaped from the Pretoria prison, was accompanying McNeil's Scouts in their exciting expedition. No sooner was the order given to "gallop," than Mr. Churchill made a bound for his saddle. It twisted, the horse, alarmed by the fire, bolted, and the young man found himself on foot and alone, with the Boers a second time within an ace of him. A horrible vision, grown lifelike in a moment, as the vision of his past before a drowning man, now flashed before him; the walls of the dreaded Model School seemed to close in—nearer—nearer. But the Boers, he decided, should not get him again without a struggle. This time he had his pistol, he could not again be hunted down unarmed in the open. He shouted—a despairing roar—to the scouts, who were fleeing all unconscious of the accident that had befallen him. Then one, turning aside, heard, stopped in his rush for life, wheeled about, grasped the dismounted man, and an instant later, with Churchill at the back of his saddle, was off again. Then the rifles above, at a range of only forty yards, rippled out a deadly tune, as the flying hoofs of the horse, wounded, and leaving behind him a track of blood, flung up the turf and sod. Yet, from the showers of lead and dust they came out alive, and Mr. Churchill lived to tell the tale of his miraculous rescue. Curiously enough, the gallant scout whose



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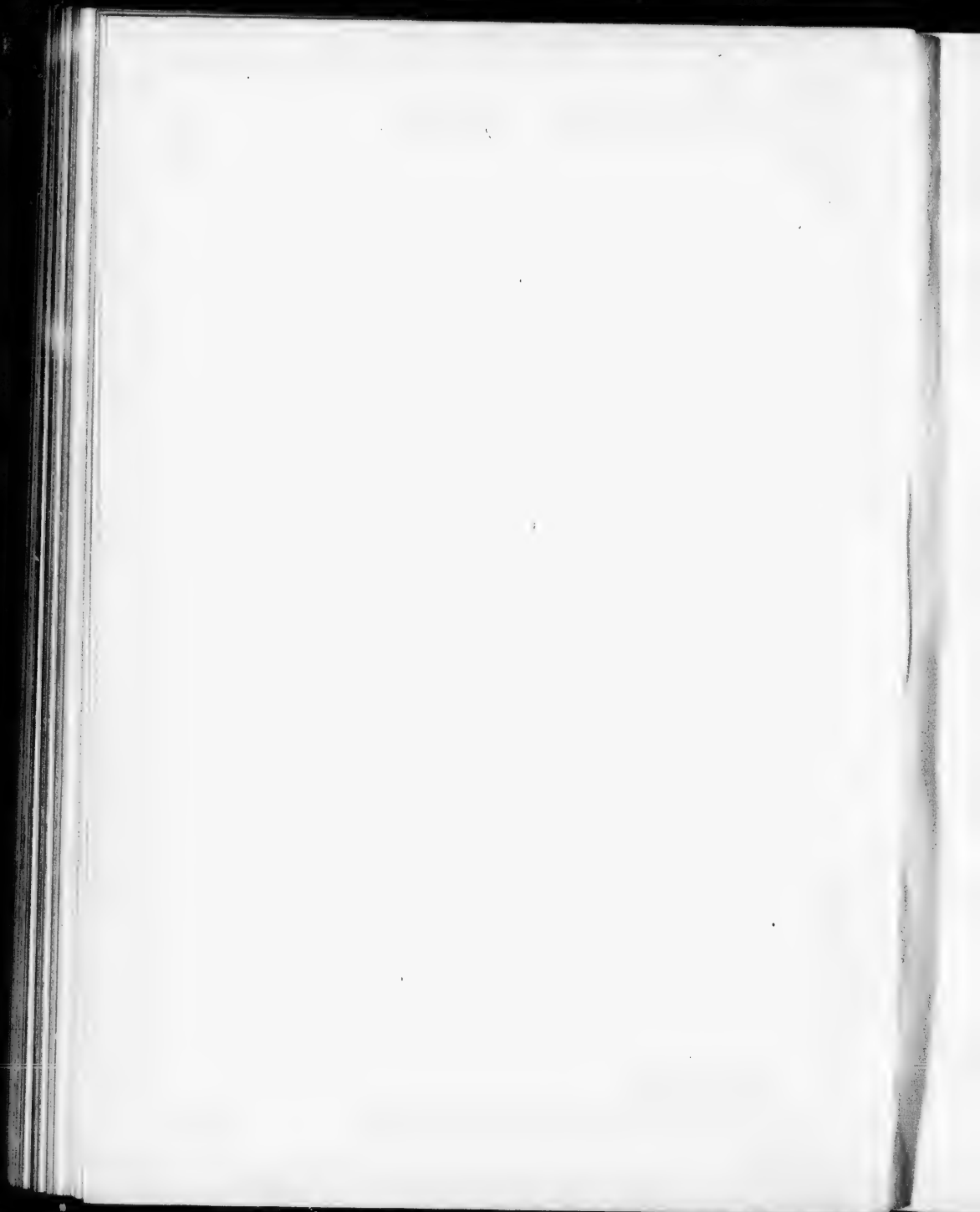
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MAJOR-GENERAL POLE-CAREW

Photo by Gregory & Co., London



## Operations for Relief

action saved the journalist's life, owned the talismanic name which moved the army as the magnet moves a needle. Trooper Roberts was recommended to the notice of Lord Roberts by General Rundle, for, as Mr. Churchill said, all the officers were agreed that the man who pulled up in such a situation to help another, was worthy of some honourable distinction.

The fighting elsewhere continued with considerable heat, and the long day was vibrant with the brawl of big guns and the cacophonous whirr of shells. Without artillery to help in pounding the enemy, General Brabazon decided it was useless to continue the reconnaissance; he therefore withdrew with what some one described as "an instructive little rear-guard action." He had done an immense amount of work, reconnoitred, located laagers, forced the enemy to move his guns, and generally discomfited him at the cost of less than a score of men. Now he rested on his oars, for instructions from head-quarters arrived advising General Rundle to wait till reinforcements should arrive before further pressing his attack.

Accordingly, on Sunday the 22nd of April, General French was despatched from Bloemfontein to assist. The force consisted of the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Brigades, the Eleventh Division (General Pole-Carew's), and some naval guns. The plan was to move to Dewetsdorp, and *en route* to turn out the enemy from his position at Leeuw Kop. General Dickson, with the 4th Brigade of Cavalry and a battery of Horse Artillery, was to move towards the south-east from Springfield, so as to head off the enemy in the event of his retreating to the east. General Stephenson, with the 18th Brigade, 83rd, 84th, and 85th Batteries, R.F.A., and two 4.7 naval guns, was to march south and effect a junction with General Pole-Carew and the Guards' Brigade, and Colonel Alderson's Mounted Infantry Brigade. At Leeuw Kop, the Guards were to get round the enemy's left flank, while a central attack was to be delivered by the 18th Brigade under General Stephenson. The Guards (who had hitherto been protecting the line), were met some five miles out, they having marched from Ferriera Siding. They proceeded to the position mentioned, some fifteen miles south-east of Bloemfontein, where the Boers were encountered. They were found to be ensconced in the high eminence of Leeuw Kop itself, and other kopjes thickly covered with bush in the north. Thereupon operations began, the artillery opening the programme some five miles off, followed by an attack late in the day on the part of the 18th Brigade and the Guards, to front and left of the enemy's position. On the north side of the position was a picturesque farm, towards which the 18th Brigade advanced. Five scouts were allowed to approach within a hundred yards before the enemy fired. Then our guns (84th Battery Field Artillery) having discovered the

## The Transvaal War

position, began to play upon it—hidden though it was by high trees and shrubberies—with such accuracy and vigour that the enemy retreated to some distant kopjes, whence they plied their Vickers-Maxims and Mausers with a will. Shells buzzed and bounded among them, but our men never flinched. They pursued their way more and more to the left, in order to surround the offending kopjes. The Warwicks in the centre, the Essex on the right, the Welsh on the left, moving in echelon, advanced. By-and-by General Dickson's cavalry, from its distant position, attempted to engage in the flanking movement, and to surround the hills if possible with mounted men during the development of the infantry attack. The operations were suddenly overtaken by an appalling darkness, which turned out to be a flight of locusts that came and went, leaving the land more bare than it was before. The infantry now were pouring volleys on the kopje, whence they were again attacked with such warmth that they had to "lie low." Their position at this time was an unenviable one, it being too exposed for advance, and too advanced for retirement. At last the Essex made a glorious dash on the western slopes, while the Warwick and Welsh regiments, wildly cheering, clambered ahead of them on the northern heights. The Boers fired half-heartedly for a time, but were subsequently seen careering down the eastern slopes, their sole care being to save themselves. Unfortunately in this gallant assault, Captain Prothero, Welsh Regiment, was mortally wounded.

The Guards, meanwhile, had extended on the right, while the Mounted Infantry, consisting of one battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry, 1st and 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, and Strathcona's Horse (on their right) came in for so devastating a welcome from the Creusot gun which the enemy had posted on a neighbouring hill, that they were forced to retire. But the artillery came to the rescue, and the Boers removed their gun. The Dutchmen now found their numbers too meagre to hold their line of defence, which covered a semicircular chain of kopjes on the east, and in the morning of the 23rd all the enemy who held Leeuw Kop were discovered to have trekked eastward. The position was ours. Quantities of ammunition and rifles were seized, and General French had commenced an animated chase to the south, though his cavalry were unable to find the Boers in any strong position in the vicinity. A noticeable feature of the day's experiences was the exhibition of the white flag on the farmhouse, whence the Boers fired on the Canadians. These gallant fellows came safely out of the treacherous downpour, but lost two horses.

On the same day (the 22nd), while the other tentacles of the great octopus, the British army, were twisting as shown, General Ian Hamilton with his Mounted Infantry Division was moving on

## Operations for Relief

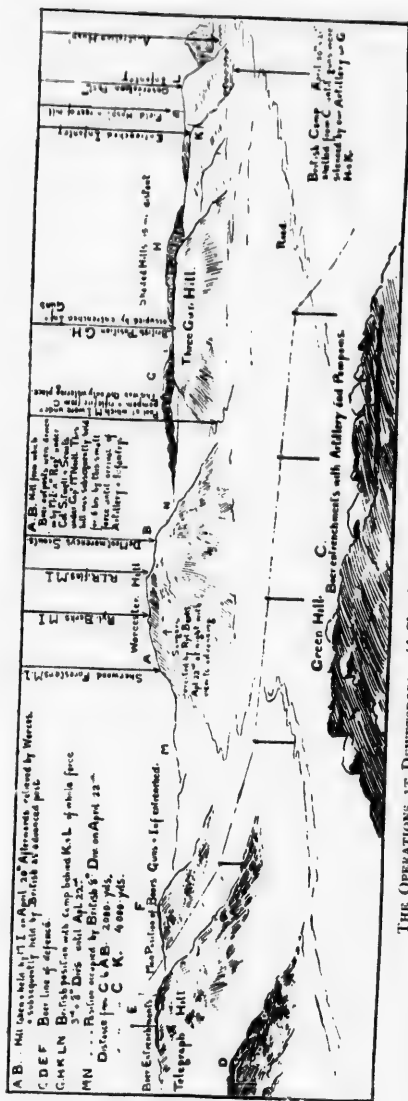
towards Sanna's Post to take possession of the waterworks there. As the enemy in some strength was holding the neighbouring hills, it was found necessary to despatch the Ninth Division, consisting of Smith-Dorien's and MacDonald's Brigades, to the support of General Ian Hamilton. With these movements we must deal anon. As Sanna's Post is situated some twenty miles from Tweede Geluk (where the Eleventh Division was operating), and twenty-five from the road to Dewetsdorp, near where we have left General Rundle, the nicety of the disposition of the troops in their relation to each other may be appreciated.

Moving almost at the same time, was Maxwell's (late Cherm-side's) Brigade (Seventh Division), which marched eastward and seized the hills covering the waggon-bridge over the Modder River at Kranz Kraal—the bridge whose utility to the Boers has been described.

Meanwhile General Brabant with his Mounted Division and General Hart's Brigade from Rouxville, had reached the vicinity of Bushman's Kop, some fourteen miles from Wepener. The bulk of the Boer force had opposed themselves to this advance, and during this time the strain on Colonel Dalgety at Wepener had naturally been relaxed. By Monday, the 23rd, the Colonial Division, supported by Hart's Brigade, had turned the Boer position, after having kept up a running fight all day. The casualties of the fight were twenty-five wounded. Some of these were removed to Basutoland, under arrangement with the resident Commissioner at Mafeteng. General Brabant was moving in a north-easterly direction, keeping Basutoland on his right flank, his operations being watched with amazing interest by the natives in this region. He was now some eight miles from Wepener and sixty from Bloemfontein, and in heliographic communication with Dalgety, a circumstance which caused the Boers round Wepener to grow uneasy as to their positions.

To return to General Pole-Carew. On the morning of Monday, the 23rd, the Boers, as we know, were found to have evacuated their main position at Leeuw Kop, and the Mounted Infantry took possession of the hill from which the enemy had been routed by the infantry. General French by then had moved on independently of his transport. Boers were known to be in the southern fringes of the Leeuw Kop position, but, without engaging them, General French pushed on, posting the 16th Lancers to keep an eye on his flank, till they should be relieved by the mounted troops which were following. Meanwhile, slowly in the rear, screened by the 4th Mounted Infantry, General Pole-Carew advanced his division and baggage train, and sent Roberts's Horse to relieve the 16th Lancers on the hill they were holding. The relievers came in for nasty

# The Transvaal War

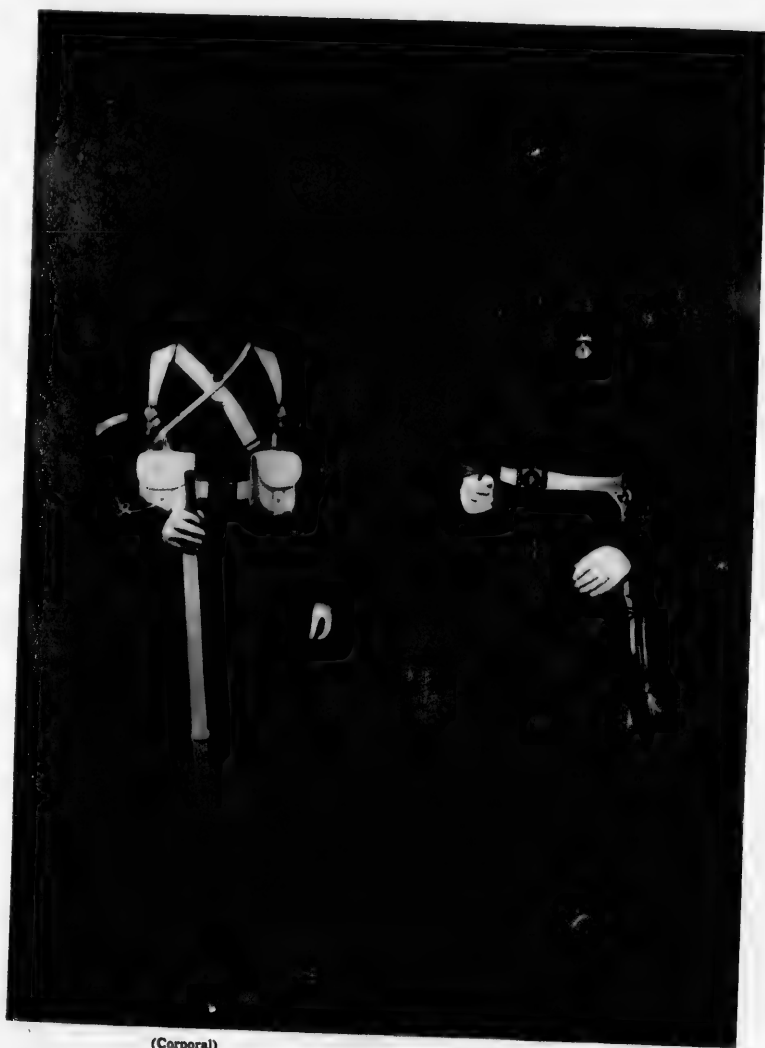


THE OPERATIONS AT DEWETSDORP. (A Sketch from the Right of the Boer Position, by Major A. Festing.)

attentions from a Maxim, but in spite of this they behaved with great gallantry, made for the kopje on which the Boers were entrenched, and finally cleared the summit. But this was not accomplished without lamentable loss. Major Brazier Creagh, 9th Bengal Lancers, who but recently had succeeded to the command of the regiment, was mortally wounded. Presently, to the assistance of Roberts's Horse came the 14th Hussars, squadrons of which regiment distributed themselves in hope of cutting off the enemy in retreat, but the Dutchmen, with all smartness, plied their guns till it was deemed best to retire, leaving the 2nd Coldstreams in the original position gained.

The cavalry soon became engaged. The Boers were espied in a long, low kopje to the east and west of the Dewetsdorp Road, the wide, flat ridge of which General French meant to seize. The 9th Lancers advanced to secure it, but the Boers instantly raced for the most advantageous position, with the result that while the troopers planted themselves on one edge of the plateau the Boers did likewise on the other. An animated combat ensued, the Lancers fighting most pluckily. The Boers offered determined resistance, where-

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# THE ROYAL MARINES

Photo by Gregory & Co., London





## Operations for Relief

on a "pom-pom" was ordered to the rescue of the Lancers, who were losing heavily. This weapon disturbed the efforts of the Dutchmen to sweep onwards, and soon they were put to flight, the "pom-poms" of the British harrying them in their retreat. The cavalry engagement was a pretty affair but costly, the dashing Lancers, enfiladed with a cruel fire, losing one officer, Captain Denny, K.D.G.'s, three wounded, and thirty-two men killed and wounded. The wounded officers were Captain H. F. W. Stanley, 9th Lancers, Lieutenant V. R. Brooke, 9th Lancers, and Lieutenant the Hon. A. W. J. C. Skeffington, 17th Lancers.

General Pole-Carew, whose object was to establish communications with General Rundle, and for that purpose was advancing his division, with baggage train, as quickly as possible, now appeared in the direction of the main kopje, where the Boers for some days had been hiding. Here Roberts's Horse came into action; they located the position, which was shelled with great vigour, while at the base was a containing line of the Warwickshire Regiment, which enabled the General to pass with division and baggage, almost under the nose of the enemy, in perfect safety. The Boers made a struggle to arrest the passage of the column, but it was a feeble one. They opened fire from the ridge where they had first ensconced themselves, and past which General Pole-Carew had to march, but the guns of the 85th Battery made their acquaintance with such scant ceremony and so much warmth that there was a stampede. After a few shots had burst into some groups of Boers they all speedily got out of range, taking with them their baggage and guns.

General Rundle, who as we know was waiting to march on Dewetsdorp, now communicated by heliograph that there were some 7000 of the enemy in his vicinity, and also that the country in front was crowded with low hills in which they might be hidden; but General Pole-Carew proceeded boldly to advance, and in his advance made some very necessary reprisals on such farmers, who, preferring covert-guile to open war, had been found aiding the enemy after receiving lenient treatment at our hands. He had previously set fire to a farmhouse whence, with a white flag flying over it, the Boers on Sunday had fired on our men. The farmers were told they could no longer play their double games, acting as they did at one moment the slim warrior, and the next the pastoral innocent.

Meanwhile General Rundle with some 2500 Boers in front of him was waiting till he should get into touch with General Pole-Carew. He was warned by heliograph of the approach of the 4th Cavalry Brigade and of General French, and throughout the 23rd there was little done save running the gantlet of shells which the Boers persistently fired but without doing serious damage. The

## The Transvaal War

Yeomanry, who already had shown remarkable "grit," received considerable attention from the "Creusots" of the enemy, who were apparently holding on to all their eastern positions regardless of the fact that the gigantic prongs of the steel trap which was being prepared for them were shortly about to close. All the forces were now gradually getting in touch with each other, and the Dutchmen's days were numbered. So it was thought on the night of the 23rd. The 24th broke quietly. No shot was fired. Rundle's force swung to the left, pivoted on Cherm-side, who remained in defence of the position, while the mounted brigade protected the outer flank. In this General French, now arrived from the north, also assisted, and proceeded to turn the enemy's left. The British movements were conducted with due silence and secrecy, they being determined to produce a surprise for the Boers. The surprise "came off," as the saying is, but it was on the wrong side. When the men creeping up the stony kopje came to peer for the enemy in the trenches they found—merely trenches. "Not a bloomin' Boer anywhere," cried a disgusted Tommy, kicking the quiet boulders with a dilapidated boot! The Dutchmen were galloping to Ladybrand. The magnificent web that had been prepared for them was empty.

An officer in the Royal Scots gave some interesting details regarding the part taken by the Third Division in this somewhat complex movement:—

At this time we heard rumours that one of our mounted companies, the one commanded by Captain Molyneux-Seel, was, together with the Colonial Division, besieged at Wepener. This proved to be correct. At 1.30 A.M. on 12th April we got orders to march at 9 A.M., under General Cherm-side, who had taken over the command of the Third Division from General Gatacre, towards Dewetsdorp and Wepener, to the relief of the column at Wepener. We reached Reddersburg that afternoon. The rain came on late that evening, and literally flooded us out. Every officer and man was up from midnight, running about trying to keep warm. We had been without tents since 31st March and are still without them (17th May). On 14th April we moved forward again and reached Rosendal, the scene of the recent disaster to the three companies of the Royal Irish Rifles and Mounted Company of the Northumberland Fusiliers. Graves, shells, cartridges, &c., here showed the tough work they had had. We remained at Rosendal waiting for the Eighth Division to come up until 19th, and had a very wet time of it. We marched again on 19th towards Dewetsdorp, about ten miles, when we went into bivouac. On 20th we moved off at 6 A.M., and after marching some six or seven miles we found the enemy in a position of very great strength covering Dewetsdorp. Our mounted infantry and artillery drove in the advanced posts, and we established ourselves on the Wakker-stroom Hills, in front of the enemy's position. It was then quite dark. We cooked our dinners as best we could, and lay down and slept the sleep of the just. I forgot to say that we found it very difficult to put out our outpost pickets in the dark, and one unfortunate party, belonging to the Worcestershire Regiment, actually walked into the enemy's lines and were captured."

## Operations for Relief

The circumstances of the capture were these. A party of some twenty-five cooks and mates were carrying food to their comrades on the top of a hill. In climbing, dinner in hand, they sought an easy place of ascent, and while doing so, moved too far and found themselves practically in the Boers' arms. Another portion of his unlucky regiment, a few days later, was drawn up for "foot and arms" inspection, and while thus exposed made a target for the enemy, who promptly seized the opportunity and killed two and wounded four of the men. Continuing his story, the officer before quoted said:—

"At 6.15 A.M. on the 21st we were standing under arms, with extra ammunition issued, awaiting orders, when, "boom," the first gun had been fired and the shell burst some 300 yards to our left. To cut a long story short, the battalion remained in reserve that day with the rest of the brigade, and the next day, but early on the 23rd we were moved up to the first line. The battalion was on the right of a battery of artillery, behind the crest of the hill on a gentle slope. Except for the men in the trenches our position was known to the enemy, but the mere fact of manning the trenches was sufficient to draw fire, and in less than half-an-hour we had four of the men who were with the main body of the battalion behind the brow hit. The bullets flew all round us, and went "phut, phut" into the ground at our feet, and it is strange that more did not find resting-places in our bodies. In half-an-hour we had thrown up parapets in front of each company, behind which the men were safe, and we suffered no more casualties. All that day and the next we remained in this position. It was most interesting watching the shells as they burst amongst our trenches, around the gunners, and over ourselves. The Boers had nine guns, and, I believe, 5000 men. Amongst the guns was a quick-firer, a 9-pounder Krupp gun, a high-velocity gun, and two pom-poms. The last-named are unpleasant to the senses, but do little harm. The noise of the discharge resembles in the distance the knocking at a door, and the men constantly replied, 'Come in,' cheery and fearless fellows that they are! On the early morning of the 25th(?) we missed our usual awakener of guns and pom-poms, and eventually we found the Boers had evacuated their positions, and, alas! had escaped us and Generals French and Hart. We at once pushed forward on to Dewetsdorp."

After all the marching and turning and fighting and manœuvring the knowing hordes had been able to steal off from every part of their horse-shoe position round Wepener entirely without chastisement! Here were five infantry and three cavalry brigades with more than seventy guns engaged in surrounding them, and yet they had succeeded in slipping through our fingers! Quite quietly, on the night of the 22nd, they had sent off their waggons; on the 23rd they had taken a parting kick at Wepener; and on the 24th they had retreated—"silently stolen away" to Ladybrand—while part of their force before Dewetsdorp, acting as a covering party, had retired on Thabanchu. That we were foiled and fooled may in a measure have been due to some

## The Transvaal War

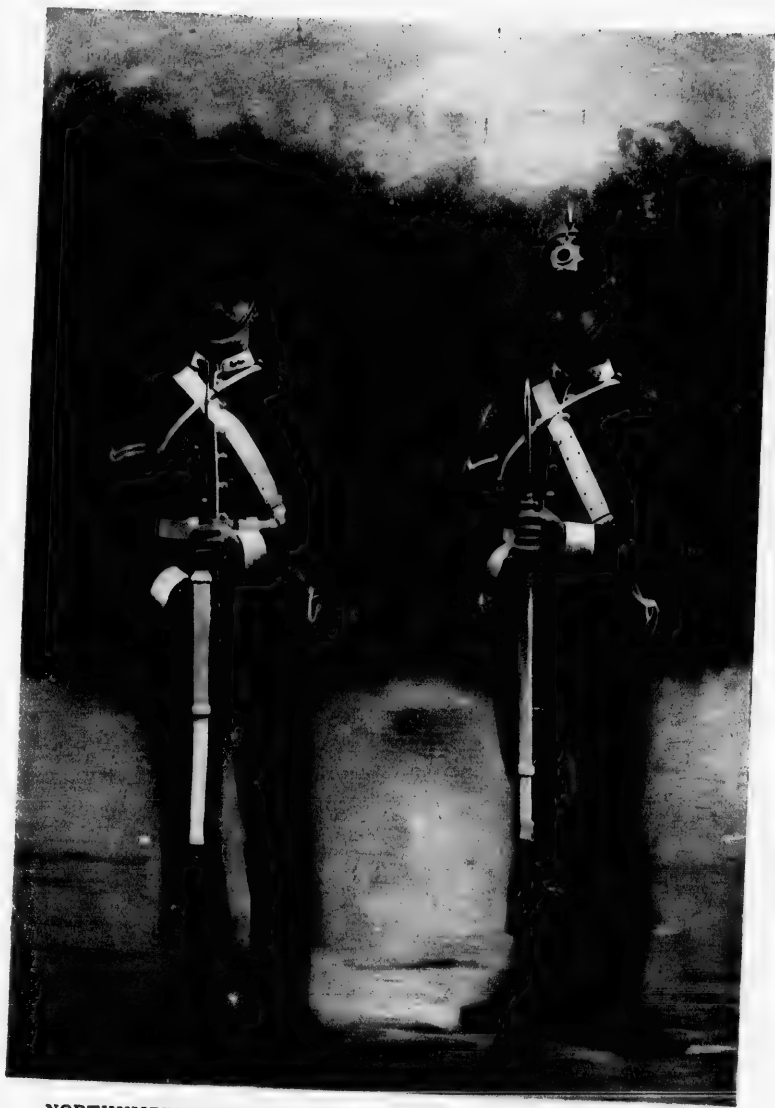
tactical bungling, but certain it was that the Boers had superior advantages, for they were moving in a country entirely friendly to them, were well informed of all our intentions and movements, and were assisted in all their schemes by so-called farmers who, subtle and shifty, had comfortably surrendered the better to engage in covert operations which, while replenishing their pockets, did not imperil their skins! Moreover they escaped scot free, because Lord Roberts was not inclined to fritter more of his troops on side issues while the great object of the campaign, the seizure of Pretoria and the crippling of the Boers for prolonged military operations, was occupying his entire attention. The capture of De Wet's forces, or a part of them, was of secondary importance in comparison to the protection of railway communication with the sea base, and De Wet's minor successes, even when the disasters of Koorn Spruit and Reddersburg were counted among them, were not sufficient to frighten the Chief into a change of his larger strategical design.

Pursuit being useless, General French sent General Brabazon to the relief of Wepener (which was already free), and he himself occupied Dewetsdorp. On the 25th, however, he received orders from Bloemfontein to chase the Boers to Thabanchu, which, at dawn, he proceeded to do, followed later by General Rundle and the Eighth Division. Meanwhile part of the Third Division under Chermiside kept the Union Jack floating in Dewetsdorp and watched over the outlying districts. General Pole-Carew, his work in the south done, started for Bloemfontein to prepare for the main advance.

Then followed a glorious march into Wepener. Generals Hart and Brabant riding to Jammersberg Drift were cheered with enthusiasm, and the former General congratulated the defenders on their dogged pluck, and declared that the credit of the relief was due to General Brabant, "with whom it was an honour to serve." General Brabant, on his side, was loud in praise of the gallant Colonials, and of the assistance given him by the Cape Field Artillery, declaring that the very first time they came into action they saved him at a critical moment. His story merits repetition. He was advancing to the relief of Wepener, and had to take Bester's Kop, a very difficult position indeed, and he had to turn the position and leave his infantry supports a long way behind him and make a wide sweep round. In doing so his force came suddenly upon a body of the enemy within 190 yards of them. For a few minutes the enemy made it very warm. The General called up two guns under Lieutenant Janisch. He knew, he said, that Lieutenant Janisch's gunners had never been in action before, and in the circumstances he was a little doubtful as to how they would behave. But what did Lieutenant Janisch do? He at once set to work, and

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**NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS**  
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**DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY**  
(Lance-Corporal)

Photo by Gregory & Co., London

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## Operations for Relief

under a terrible fire, with shrapnel at 650 yards, and any man who knew what that meant, or who had seen it done as he had, would say that it was marvellously well done, with perfect coolness—with the coolness of veterans. In ten minutes Lieutenant Janisch had cleared the hillside. That, said the General, was a grand thing for men to do, men who, many of them, had never seen a shot fired in anger, and he had drawn the attention of the Commander-in-chief to the fact. There were no braver men in the service than the Royal Artillery, but the R.A. could not possibly have behaved better than the Cape Field Artillery did, and his only regret was that he could not get the other guns under Major Inglesby.

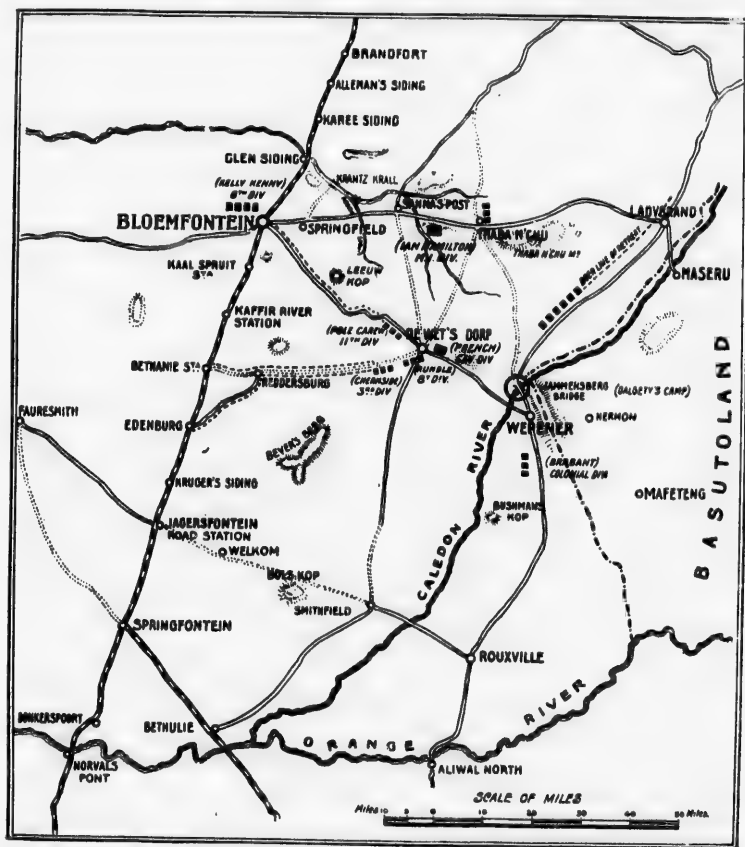
The Colonials afterwards proceeded to join General Rundle's force, as the enemy, to avoid being caught, was now "on the run." Flying north-eastward along the Ladybrand Road some three or four thousand of them went as fast as legs, equine and human, would carry them. They evacuated the kopjes near the water-works, they bolted from the neighbourhood of Dewetsdorp, they rushed from Jammersberg Drift—in fact, as the jovial Colonials said, "the enemy conjugated the verb to skedaddle" from all positions in a masterly manner. They were getting good practice, but they began to fear that there were others who might learn to cut across country besides themselves.

On the 28th General Brabazon, having completed his work at Wepener, moved *via* Dewetsdorp on the way towards Thabanchu. As he was nearing this place he suddenly became aware that a British convoy had been caught in between the hills and was being briskly shelled by the Boers. Promptly he bribed a Kaffir to worm through the Boer lines and convey to the sturdy Yeomanry who were defending the convoy, the advice to hold on till he should advance to their aid. The message was delivered, and the Yeomanry stuck out manfully until, at dawn, the General and his Yeomanry came upon the scene. Thereupon the Boers, with their usual astuteness, made off, while rescuers and rescued alike pursued their way in triumph to Thabanchu.

Soon Wepener was deserted. The British in that locality took refuge in Mafeteng, while the troops which had evacuated the place were sweeping up the Free State after the Federals. These "slimly" enough were getting away with herds, and stores, and guns without being caught in any very huge numbers. A large party of Free Staters had taken up a truculent position to the north of Thabanchu Mountain, for the purpose of protecting their fellows and covering the withdrawal of their waggon convoys from the south, and they succeeded in taking with them the twenty-five prisoners of the Worcesters, who had unwarily dropped into their clutches at Dewets-

## The Transvaal War

dorp. The Transvaalers, on the other hand, at the instance of President Kruger, were trekking towards the north in order to save their energies for coming operations across the Vaal, but they took good care before leaving to make themselves as obnoxious as possible to such farmers as had surrendered to the British Government.



### THE TENTACLES AT WORK

We left General Ian Hamilton on April 22nd, starting from Bloemfontein to take possession of the waterworks at Sanna's Post. His force was composed of about 2000 Light Horse, Australians and



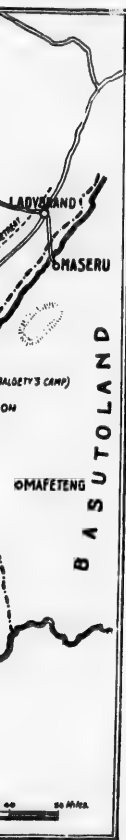
## The Tentacles at Work

Mounted Infantry, and one battery of Horse Artillery; but following him closely, as has been said, came the Ninth Division, consisting of Smith-Dorrien's and MacDonald's Brigades. On reaching the waterworks the General decided, after reconnoitring, that they were but weakly held, and proceeded to attack the enemy, drive him into the distant hills, and recapture the waterworks and the drift over the river. The enemy had removed the eccentrics from the waterworks, thinking to paralyse British operations for a month or two, but it soon became evident that the mechanists in Bloemfontein were prepared to manufacture new ones at short notice. The drift was occupied on the 24th, and the enemy, for reasons above mentioned, made his way to a formidable position behind Thabanchu, whither it was decided he must be chased, and speedily.

On the same day 800 Boers were found at Israel's Poort, some seven miles from Thabanchu. Their demeanour was aggressive. They were posted on a semicircle of small kopjes, carefully entrenched and protected by two guns and barbed-wire entanglements. General Ian Hamilton decided that the Dutchmen must be removed, and removed they were, mainly by the gallantry of the Canadians and the Shropshires, supported by the Grahamstown Horse. With remarkable celerity the hills were cleared and the Boers driven off. The Canadians, commanded by Colonel Otter, approached by clever successive rushes to the foot of the kopjes before the Boers opened fire. Then, in the midst of a sharp volley from the enemy they came on the barbed-wire entanglements, but, undaunted, cut or cleared them, and with a gallant rush ascended the hill. With great ingenuity they took whatever cover they could, while from above, the storm from the hostile Mausers—which during the engagement had doubled in number—grew hotter and hotter. Colonel Otter was struck in the neck, but pursued his way, cheering on his gallant men. Presently another bullet found him out; tore from his shoulder its badge, but did no further damage. Still up they all went, with a glorious, an inspiring yell, which apparently sent the Federals scudding into space. The crest of the hill was now the property of the Canadians and the Grahamstown Volunteers, who unfortunately lost a valuable officer—Captain Gethin. The Canadian losses were not so heavy as might have been expected, owing to the skill with which their advance was arranged and carried out; but the splendid turning movement was not without cost to others. During the fight Major Marshall (Grahamstown Mounted Rifles) was severely wounded, and also Lieutenants Murray, Winnery, Barry, Hill, and Rawal. Colonel Otter (Canadian Regiment), as has been said, was only slightly injured. The same night General Hamilton occupied Thabanchu.

On the 23th General French, as we know, had received

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## The Transvaal War

orders from head-quarters to pursue the enemy in his retreat northwards to Thabanchu. Here the cavalry, covering Rundle's advance, arrived at midday on Friday the 27th to find General Ian Hamilton engaged with a horde of Boers temporarily routed, but holding a threatening position to the east of the place. An effort was made to dislodge the Dutchmen entirely. Cavalry and Mounted Infantry were sent to either flank, while the infantry advanced in front. But the mounted force was small, and moreover dreadfully fatigued (they having endured considerable hardships—half-rations among them—in the hurried march to Thabanchu), while the Boer position, as usual, was extensive, and therefore the cavalry was recalled. The Boers followed up the retirement with great skill, pressing so closely on the troops as to cause considerable anxiety, particularly for the safety of Kitchener's Horse, which did not get clear away till midnight. It was evident that the foe was bent on making valiant and despairing efforts to arrest the progress of the troops towards the east. From this part of the Orange Free State, in the neighbourhood of Ladybrand and Ficksburg, they drew their corn and other supplies, and these they were determined not to relinquish without a struggle.

During the day's engagement Lieutenant Geary, Hampshire Regiment, was killed, and Captain Warren, of Kitchener's Horse, was severely wounded.

Meanwhile General Rundle with the Eighth Division had arrived from Dewetsdorp. The advance of Generals Rundle and Cherm-side towards the north had had the effect of a vast sweeping machine. The country south and east had gradually been scoured of the enemy, with the result that he was gathered—and very cleverly gathered!—in a heap in the hills around Thabanchu. Some of the Transvaalers, however, were returning to their farms, while others were scuttling across country, retiring “the better to jump,” as the French would say.

General Pole-Carew's march and prompt measures were also producing excellent effects, and helping to correct the misunderstandings created in the ignorant mind by British leniency. Till now the Boers had not been taught that there was necessity for honour even among foes, but now the General took drastic measures to show burghers on whose farms he found rifles that British “magnanimity” was not without its limits. Wherever these turn-coats were found their horses and cattle were captured, their meal and provisions destroyed or carried off. In this way the delinquents were punished, and the Federal Army was crippled in the matter of supplies. Generals Pole-Carew and Stephenson, in conjunction with General Rundle's advance, and acting on information from the Intelligence Department, had made a round of certain farms

## The Tentacles at Work

in the district of Leeuw Kop, and everywhere propagated their wholesome lesson. The women and children, however, were treated with great consideration. There were, of course, tragic moments with these weaklings, whose notions of morality in the art of war were nil. All that interested them was to preserve their homesteads, and sell at as profitable rates as possible their goods to the first British buyer who had money in his pocket. They saw no sin in declaring they had no concealed ammunition when the place was stocked with it, or in handing out a few disabled rifles and burying the better ones for use "on a rainy day." Only when General Pole-Carew insisted that the Boers should give up with their Mausers a reasonable amount of ammunition, on pain of being seized as prisoners of war, were Mausers and ammunition in plenty forthcoming. There was now no doubt that these prompt measures helped to clear the military situation with astonishing rapidity. A typical conversation which conveyed a world of instruction took place during one of General Pole-Carew's invasions. A young Transvaal prisoner, who was standing among the confiscated goods from many farms, was questioned how long he thought the war would last. He cast a rueful glance at the commandeered effects, and said, "Not long, if this continues!" General Pole-Carew could have had no greater compliment to his acumen in dealing with what for more than a month past had been a perplexing problem!

So far, things were progressing favourably. At Bloemfontein there had been some fear of a water famine, but the recent rains had beneficently filled the dams, and good drinking-water was obtained by boring. The repairs of the damage done by the Boers to the waterworks went on apace, and at the same time arrangements for the general advance northwards were approaching completion. It was decided that the task of continuing the sweeping operations in the south-eastern corner of the Free State should be assigned to General Sir Leslie Rundle, and to this end he was to be left at Thabanchu in command of the Eighth Division, plus some 800 Imperial Yeomanry under General Brabazon, while Generals French and Hamilton proceeded north.

Thabanchu, on account of its strategical importance, both in view of its proximity to Bloemfontein and of checking further raids, the British determined to hold, and hold firmly, for the future. Accordingly at dawn on the 28th General French directed a great movement for the purpose of entirely routing the Boers from its neighbourhood. This was easier in conception than accomplishment. General Gordon's Cavalry Brigade moved round the left, the Mounted Infantry with General Smith-Dorrien's Infantry Brigade assailed the right, while General Rundle's somewhat worn-

## The Transvaal War

out division held the front of the enemy's position. The Boer left was so strong that General Gordon had to content himself with merely hammering at it, but the Boer right crumbled away before General Hamilton's advance, and opened a road for General Dickson's Cavalry Brigade, which, once having dashed through, sent the Boers scampering like goats from ridge to ridge. In a few moments it seemed that, with the British in the rear of their hill, the Dutchmen would be enclosed. Quickly came General Hamilton with such troops as he could muster to effect this desired consummation; but more quickly still, and with surprising regularity and



KENT COTTAGE, CRONJE'S QUARTERS IN ST. HELENA.

precision, the Boer hordes, moving with such discipline as to be mistaken for a British mounted brigade, marched off to the northeast, while others of their huge numbers returned in force, harassed General Dickson's left and rear, and forced him in his turn quickly to retire. Thus ended a laudable effort.

The operations around Thabanchu and Ladybrand had therefore to be briskly continued, for at this time General Rundle stood in hourly danger of being invested, and General French with his flying warriors in a region of hill and dale was somewhat handicapped in his ability to help him. Still he kept a magnetic eye on the enemy which served to hold him, while General Ian Hamilton, moving on the left, prepared if possible to proceed forwards and join the main advance.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREAT ADVANCE<sup>1</sup>

THE evil effects of British leniency became still more evident. A hostile society had been organised in Bloemfontein for the purpose of communicating with the enemy and arming surreptitiously at the neighbouring farms. Spies carried news of the British movements, and messengers came in and out under pretext of bringing their goods to market. In short, it was discovered that the outlying farmers were developing into secret-service agents, and were, moreover, lending themselves to the atrocious practice of flying white flags for the purpose of firing at short ranges at unwary patrols. It was found necessary to meet such duplicity with stern reprisals, and following the example set by Moltke in '71, when it was incumbent on him to protect his communications from *franc-tireurs*, it was decided that strongest measures must be resorted to to prevent abuse of confidence in the future. Lord Roberts had tried magnanimity and it had failed. He now determined that a severe course must be adopted by which offenders in future might be made to suffer for acts of duplicity in property and in person. Accordingly, no one was permitted to pass in and out of Bloemfontein, the enemy was deprived of their horses in order that their activity in despatch riding might be limited, and the discovery of hidden cartridges or suspicious documents were in future to be looked upon as sufficient to convict. Various residents in the town were tried on charges of concealing arms and ammunition, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment respectively, while their property was confiscated. These examples were productive of almost instantaneous good result, for unprecedented supplies were pouring into Bloemfontein. General Pole-Carew, who returned to the capital on the 29th of April, had done wonderful work in correcting the abuses that early leniency had brought about. Wherever farmers who had made their submission were discovered to be again fighting, their property had been confiscated. Forage had been taken and receipts given as a rule, thus preventing the surrounding farms from becoming depôts for the enemy. Such precautions adopted earlier would have averted many bloody tussles and much inconvenience and loss of time, for *sans* forage the raiding capabilities of the various commandos would have been sorely handicapped.

<sup>1</sup> See map at front.

## The Transvaal War

However, even chieftains may live and learn, and Lord Roberts applied himself quickly to the lesson that was forced on him by the ingratitude of the conquered. At the same time the last strokes were being put to the preparations for the great onward march. The regiments were exchanging their tattered and battered cotton khaki for woollen suits, wherewith to meet the change of season, and their soleless boots were being replaced by new ones. All this trans-mogrification was not to be accomplished in haste, for the same reason that made it impossible to bring up necessities for the hospital. The line of rail was groaning with the enormous bulk of provisions needful to sustain the bare life of the force, and consequently such matters as raiment and equipment had to take a secondary place among the urgent needs of the moment. General Pole-Carew's Division, after a hard bout of fighting, no sooner returned than it made ready to engage in the pending operations.

The day being Sunday (the 29th), the Field-Marshal, accompanied by Lady Roberts and their daughter, attended divine service at the Cathedral, a last family reunion previous to setting off on the unknown—the great march to Pretoria. At that time none could guess what form of resistance the burghers of Johannesburg and Pretoria might take it into their heads to offer, and fearful threats to stagger humanity by blowing up the mines and committing various other acts of barbarism were bruited abroad.

Fever still raged in the town, and as many as 3000 patients were said to be in hospital. The outburst of sickness, due in the first instance to the polluted conditions surrounding Cronje's camp at Paardeberg, was accelerated by the lack of water after the affair at Koorn Spruit, when the triumphant Boers captured and disabled the waterworks and deprived the town of pure water, leaving the population dependent for drinking-water on wells which, in many cases, were merely sinks of abomination.

Nevertheless, the red business of war had to be pursued at all costs, and May Day was kept in martial manner. With dawn came the music of bands innumerable and inspiring, and the mighty clangour of armed men, of clamping steeds, of rolling waggons. Pole-Carew and his division were starting for Karee Siding, *en route* for the great, it was hoped, the final move! In the market-square, to watch the march past of the brigade of goodly Guardsmen, of stalwart Welsh, Warwick, Essex, and York regiments, stood Lord Roberts, Lady Roberts, and their daughter. It was a grand though workmanly spectacle, the bearded veterans in their woollen khaki being laden with blankets, macintoshes, haversacks, and in some cases, countrymen's bandanna bundles stocked with good things. Though this may be looked on as the beginning of the general exodus, the Chief himself did not move till later.

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MAJOR-GENERAL IAN HAMILTON

Photo by Johnston & Hoffmann, Simla





## The Great Advance

Before starting off Lord Roberts made elaborate arrangements for simultaneous movement in other parts of the theatre of war. Wepener relieved, Hart's Brigade was sent to join Barton's at Kimberley. At that place there was therefore the complete Tenth Division under General Hunter, and Lord Methuen's redistributed division comprising the brigades under Generals Douglas and Paget. Elsewhere, wheel was arranged to move within wheel.

Lord Roberts's programme seemed simple enough—on paper. He, with a portion of his army, the Seventh and Eleventh Divisions, intended to advance with speed and on the broadest front possible, hugging the railway line (astride which the Boer positions were sure to be found), till he should have reached the capital of the Transvaal and struck a blow which should destroy the arrogant hopes of President Kruger and demonstrate to the Boers the futility of further resistance. At the same time, on the east of the line, a strong detachment was to keep an eye on the hovering hordes of Dutchmen which still lingered there, while further still, Sir Redvers Buller was to advance along the railway from Ladysmith, and if possible to join hands with the main army later on during the operations. Simultaneously, on the west, the relief of Mafeking was to be attempted by a flying column. Hunter's and Methuen's divisions in support acted in concert, and further held themselves in readiness to advance and join in the general operations should occasion demand.

The main army, consisting of the Seventh and Eleventh Divisions, was to march, as said, on the broadest possible front; the left wing—the cavalry under General French—to proceed in advance over the open country; while the right wing, also in advance, commanded by General Ian Hamilton, was to perform a sweeping movement throughout the Boer-haunted regions along the Winburg, Ventersburg, and Kroonstadt roads, and threaten in turn the defensive positions of the foe, forcing them everywhere to choose between investment or retreat.

The troops acting in concert with Lord Roberts in his second great advance were distributed as follows:—

### *Commanding-in-chief*—FIELD-MARSHAL LORD ROBERTS.

#### SEVENTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General G. TUCKER.

14th Brigade (Major-General J. G. Maxwell).  
2nd Norfolk.  
2nd Lincoln.  
1st King's Own Scottish Borderers.  
2nd Hants.

15th Brigade (Major-General A. G. Wavell).  
2nd Cheshire.  
1st East Lancashire.  
2nd South Wales Borderers.  
2nd North Stafford.  
18th, 62nd, 75th Field Batteries.  
9th Company Royal Engineers.

# The Transvaal War

## NINTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. E. COLVILLE.  
(Temporarily broken up.)

3rd Brigade  
(Major-General H. A. MacDonald).  
1st Argyll and Sutherland.  
2nd Seaforth Highlanders.  
2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch).

## ELEVENTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General R. POLE-CAREW.  
1st Brigade (Major-General Inigo R. Jones).  
3rd Grenadier Guards.  
1st Coldstream Guards.  
2nd Coldstream Guards.  
1st Scots Guards.

18th Brigade  
(Major-General T. E. Stephenson).  
1st Essex.  
1st Yorkshire.  
1st Welsh.  
2nd Royal Warwickshire.  
83rd, 84th, and 85th Field Batteries.

## CAVALRY DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General J. D. P. FRENCH.  
1st Brigade  
(Brigadier-General T. C. Porter).  
6th Dragoon Guards.  
6th Dragoons.  
2nd Dragoons.  
2nd Brigade  
(Brigadier-General R. G. Broadwood).  
10th Hussars.  
12th Lancers.  
Household Cavalry.

3rd Brigade  
(Brigadier-General J. R. P. Gordon).  
9th Lancers.  
16th Lancers.  
17th Lancers.

4th Brigade  
(Major-General J. B. B. Dickson).  
7th Dragoon Guards.  
8th Hussars.  
14th Hussars.  
G, J, O, P, Q, R, T, U Batteries Horse Artillery.

## MOUNTED INFANTRY DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General IAN HAMILTON.  
1st Brigade (Major-General E. T. H. Hutton).  
1st Corps (Colonel E. A. H. Alderson).  
1st Canadian Mounted Rifles.  
2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles.  
Lord Strathcona's Corps.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.

2nd Corps (Colonel de Lisle).  
New South Wales Mounted Infantry.  
West Australian Mounted Infantry.  
3rd Corps (Colonel T. D. Pi'cher).  
Queensland Mounted Infantry.  
New Zealand Mounted Infantry.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.

4th Corps (Colonel Henry).  
Victorian Mounted Infantry.  
South Australian Mounted Infantry.  
Tasmanian Mounted Infantry.  
One Battalion Imperial Mounted Infantry.  
2nd Brigade (Major-General Ridley).  
South African Irregulars Mounted Infantry.  
Several Batteries Artillery.

## INFANTRY DIVISION.

(Temporarily attached to Mounted Infantry Division.)

Major-General H. L. SMITH-DORRIEN.  
19th Brigade (Colonel J. Spens).  
2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.  
2nd Shropshire Light Infantry.  
1st Gordon Highlanders.  
Canadian Regiment.  
21st Brigade  
(Major-General Bruce Hamilton).  
1st Derbyshire.  
1st Royal Sussex.  
1st Cameron Highlanders.  
City Imperial Volunteers.

## EIGHTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. M. L. RUNDLE.  
16th Brigade  
(Major-General B. B. D. Campbell).  
2nd Grenadier Guards.  
2nd Scots Guards.  
2nd East Yorks.  
1st Leinster.  
17th Brigade (Major-General J. E. Boyes).  
1st Worcester.  
2nd Royal West Kent.  
1st South Stafford.  
2nd Manchester.  
Brigade Division Royal Field Artillery.  
5th Company Royal Engineers.

## THIRD DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir H. G. CHERMSIDE.  
2nd Brigade (Major-General R. E. Allen).  
2nd Royal Irish Rifles.  
2nd Northumberland Fusiliers.  
1st Royal Scots.  
2nd Berkshire.

# The Great Advance

23rd Brigade (Major-General W. G. Knox).  
(Composition not known.)  
74th, 77th, and 79th Field Batteries.

## COLONIAL DIVISION.

Major-General BRABANT.

Cape Mounted Rifles.  
Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles.  
Montmorency's Scouts (200).  
Brabant's Horse (1200).  
Border Horse.  
Frontier Mounted Rifles.  
Queenstown Volunteers.  
Cape Garrison Artillery.  
Two naval 12-pounders.

## SIXTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General T. KELLY-KENNY.

12th Brigade (Major-General Clements).  
2nd Worcestershire.  
2nd Bedfordshire.  
2nd Wiltshire.  
1st Royal Irish Regiment.  
13th Brigade (Major-General C. E. Knox).  
2nd East Kent.  
1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

1st West Riding.  
2nd Gloucester.  
76th, 81st, and 82nd Field Batteries.  
38th Company Royal Engineers.

## OTHER TROOPS WITH LORD ROBERTS.

(Brigades not known.)

Highland Light Infantry.  
1st Suffolk.  
Roberts's Horse.  
Kitchener's Horse.  
Marshall's Horse (Grahamstown Volunteers).  
1st Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
4th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
7th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
8th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
11th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry.  
C.I.V. Mounted Infantry.  
Ceylon Mounted Infantry.  
Lumsden's Horse.  
Lord Loch's Horse.  
43rd, 65th, 86th, and 87th Howitzer Batteries.  
2nd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 17th, 38th, 39th, 68th, and  
88th Field Batteries.  
Eight naval 4.7-in. guns.  
Part of Siege Train.

The advance may be said really to have commenced on the 30th of April, with the departure on the one hand of General Ian Hamilton from Thabanchu, followed rapidly on the other by General French. The Field-Marshal, as stated, did not move for a day or two later. When he did so, events succeeded each other with the precision of clockwork. The hundred and twenty miles from Bloemfontein to Kroonstadt was accomplished in a fortnight, and may be described as an almost bloodless progress. Many glorious deeds were done, and some lives were lost; but this march must be looked on as a whole, and not viewed in detail. There were at least no decisive battles. Every step, marvellously organised and magnificently carried out, became a development of the pushing-on system by a species of skilfully devised military pressure from all parts. The enemy was driven from point to point, now fighting, now retreating, destroying water-tanks and pumping adjuncts, blowing up bridges and twisting rails, as a natural consequence of his spite; while the British, sprayed out over the country, made an almost triumphal progress, routing the enemy from every stronghold, and capturing waggons and prisoners by the way. Brandfort, whither the Boers had departed after the battle of Karree, was occupied by Lord Roberts on the 3rd of May, the Boers, under General Delarey, vacating their strongholds south of the town and retreating towards the north-east. Brandfort is merely a village situated some thirty-six miles north of Bloemfontein, and

## The Transvaal War

owes its importance to the fact that it is situated on the direct road to Kroonstadt.

A reconnaissance was made there some four days previous to the advance, when a grievous though heroic incident took place, which cannot be overlooked, as it serves to show the stuff of which the men of Lumsden's Horse were made. Some twenty-five of the Behar Section, who were holding a detached kopje during the reconnaissance, were surrounded and fired on in their isolated position by some 200 Boers. The officer commanding (Lieutenant Crane) was almost instantly wounded, so also was Sergeant-Major Marsham. Two gallant troopers, Case and Firth, though well aware that they were outnumbered and that surrender in the circumstances would be justifiable, refused to desert their officer, though ordered by him to do so, and continued valiantly to fire till they themselves dropped dead, a sacrifice to their own gallantry. Nor were the rest of the band less remarkable for "grit," for out of the small number holding the kopje nine were wounded and five killed! It was hoped on the arrival of the army at Brandfort that the wounded prisoners might be recovered, but it was afterwards found that the Boers had removed them.

To return to the main advance. The town was occupied without serious opposition, as the Dutch hosts, some 4000 of them, who had declared their intention of fighting to the bitter end, simply melted away under pressure of the cleverly combined movement. The force had been preceded overnight by two battalions of Guards, who were deputed to hold a menacing kopje, which mounted guard over a spruit, known to be a favourable harbourage for the enemy. As a natural consequence of this skilful preparation, the Boers were forced to resign their comfortable hiding-place, and the army was enabled to advance in safety. The 1st Brigade of Mounted Infantry (Hutton) covered the left flank, and 14th Brigade of the Seventh Division (Maxwell) supported by the 15th Brigade (Wavell) covered the right flank. General Pole-Carew's Division marched in the centre, General Inigo Jones on the right, and General Stephenson on the left.

General Maxwell encountered the enemy, who, posted in a good position, attacked him with two guns, which eventually were silenced by the British artillery. He then succeeded in sending the whole of the eastern force scudding towards the north, while General Hutton on his side, making an unusual detour, and assisted by No. 9 Field Battery and Colonel Alderson with his smart Colonials, prepared a little surprise, and contrived so to pound and harass the enemy on the hill commanding the town, that their valour, chastened by discretion and shrapnel, subsided, and they scurried away across the plains, thus leaving the coast clear. Several prisoners were captured, among them the commandant of the town, who had returned

## The Great Advance

there for the purpose of destroying the instruments at the telegraph office. Among the defending force was the Irish-American Contingent, a riotous crew, who, according to the townfolk, must have been to the Boers more bother than they were worth. During the engagement Captain Williams (2nd Hampshire Regiment) was wounded.

On the 4th, the Mounted Infantry, under General Hutton, covering a front of ten miles, proceeded on their way, reconnoitred up to the Vet River, and meanwhile cleared the rail of such Boer stragglers as happened to be hanging about, as far as Eensgevonden, where they bivouacked. They were followed the next day by the rest of the force, all branches of which had been in communication by heliograph.

At dawn on the 5th, the river was found by the West Australians to be held by the enemy. The guns advanced, and a fierce artillery duel followed, in which the 84th and 85th Batteries had some exciting experiences, and escaped as by a miracle without injury. Later on, two naval 12-pounders assisted them, and there was warm work till sunset, the Boers on the opposite bank fighting with rare obstinacy, and only desisting occasionally the better to leap to the attack. Meanwhile on the left, the sound of General Hutton's further operations could be heard. Having endeavoured to find a drift to the west, this officer encountered the enemy in possession, and was greeted by a duet from a hostile Maxim and a pom-pom. This presently developed into a quartet, the British galloping Maxim and a pom-pom taking so prominent a part that presently the Boers, concealed in the bed of the river, began to feel uncomfortable. News had come in to the Chief at mid-day that the enemy meant to hold the Vet River, and was there located with the necessary equipment of field-guns and Mausers, and that he was already in touch with Hutton's Brigade on the left. The army, taking advantage of such daylight as remained, moved on, and presently, across the river, and on the distant hills, blue-grey smoke in panting puffs bespoke the activities of the Colonials. To their assistance went naval guns, great and small, carrying messages of fuming green horror to the other side of the water. While this was taking place the Canadians and Tasmanians were grandly fighting their way across the river, and the gallant New Zealanders, taking their share, plunged into the midst of the Boers and scattered them from a kopje they were holding; themselves paying dearly the penalty of triumph. They were afterwards supported by two companies of the Guards. The Dutchmen eventually were routed from their positions south of the river, and General Hutton succeeded in turning the enemy's right, and establishing himself the next day on the north bank. The only officer wounded in General Pole-Carew's Division was Lieutenant

## The Transvaal War

the Hon. M. Parker, Grenadier Guards. General Hutton's operations had been entirely successful, some forty Boers had been put out of action, twelve prisoners and a Maxim were captured with comparatively small loss to the entire force. The Boer horde, which had left its position by the river, now congregated some ten miles off, with a view to the protection of the main body of the foe, who were falling back on Kroonstadt.

The turning movement was declared to be an admirable feat, executed admirably by the Canadians, New South Wales, New Zealand Rifles, and the Queensland Mounted Infantry, whose dash and daring were much eulogised. The first phase of the general advance was promising well. Lord Roberts, according to his plan, had cleared and engaged the south-eastern districts with such celerity that the enemy had not been given breathing time to concentrate in front of the advancing force. On the 6th the British Army crossed the Vet River and encamped at Smaldeel Junction, where many of the Dutchmen, confessing themselves sick of the war, surrendered. The rest of the enemy was in swift retreat in the direction of Zand River and Kroonstadt, where it was thought they would make a final stand. They took care, however, to damage the rail. Rackarock, placed at intervals on the line, was discovered by a Westralian Mounted Infantryman. The force captured a Maxim gun and twenty-five prisoners. Meanwhile, General Ian Hamilton had occupied Winburg. But of his march anon. The following days, the 7th and 8th, there was a halt for two days. The object of the halt was to enable the cavalry to return from Bloemfontein, and take its place in the original combined scheme of operations as described, and also to allow of the completion of certain necessary work on the railway. On the 8th, General French with his cavalry, forming the left wing of the advancing army, reached Smaldeel. It was doubtful whether the Federals intended to dispute the passage of the Zand River, but Hutton to right and Broadwood to left reconnoitred, and it was found that both Delarey and Botha, with some sixteen guns between them, were posted on the north bank in the direct line of the main advance, and therefore the British troops might prepare for stiff work.

Reports now came in that the enemy was hurrying back from the Zand to the Vaal though some of the burghers, the Free State ones, remained and delivered up rifles and horses to the British authorities. They had decided to break with the Transvaalers on the border of their territory. While the halt was taking place, there was activity elsewhere. A strong force from Chermiside's Division, on the 3rd, had garrisoned Wepener under Lord Castle-town, who was appointed Commissioner for the Wepener district, and General Brabant's Colonial Division had moved to Thabanchu,

## From Thabanchu to Winburg

where it arrived on the 7th. On the 9th, Lord Roberts drew in his right column, and concentrated his whole force in the neighbourhood of Welgelegen, some seven miles south of the Zand River. The march of General Ian Hamilton to this point now claims attention.

### FROM THABANCHU TO WINBURG AND WELGELEGEN (GENERAL IAN HAMILTON)

On the 30th of April General Ian Hamilton was marching north with a view to making his way to Winburg *via* the Jacobsrust Road. His force consisted of cavalry, including Broadwood's mounted infantry, Smith-Dorrien's, Bruce Hamilton's, and Ridley's commands. His progress was blocked by Botha, who, having been driven northward from Thabanchu, now turned at bay and planted himself firmly on Thaba Mountain, and across the road towards Houtnek. The centre and left of his position seemed almost impregnable, therefore the right, as the weakest point, was chosen for attack. The mounted infantry made for the stronghold, and Smith-Dorrien, with part of his brigade, followed in support—all the troops pushing their way towards the objective under the ferocious fire of the foe. The Boers, seeing the designs of the British, made valiant efforts to retain the hill, and continual reinforcements came to their aid, rendering the task of our advancing troops more and more dangerous. At this time, the fight growing momentarily warmer, and the struggle for possession of the vantage point more and more intense, Captain Towse (Gordon Highlanders) with twelve of his men and a few of Kitchener's Horse managed to gain the top, but in so doing suddenly found himself and his diminutive band removed from support. At this critical juncture a party of some 150 Boers approached, intending also to seize the plateau occupied by the small band of Scotsmen, and came within 100 yards of the Highlanders without either observing them or being observed by them. But, no sooner were the Dutchmen aware of the existence of the British, and of their small number and their apparent helplessness, than they promptly called on them to surrender. "Surrender?" cried Captain Towse in a voice of thunder, and instantly ordered his men to open fire! The blood of Scotland was up. The command was quickly obeyed, and the lion-hearted little band not only fired, but led by their splendid officer charged fiercely with the bayonet straight into the thick mass of Dutchmen. A moment of uproar, of amazement, and then—flying heels. The valorous Highlanders had succeeded, despite their inferior numbers, in driving off the hostile horde and taking possession of the plateau! But, unfortunately, the magnificent daring of the commanding officer had cost him almost more than life. A shot across the eyes shattered them, blinding



## The Transvaal War

him, and thus depriving her Majesty's Service of one of its noblest ornaments.

But the great work was accomplished—and the summit of the hill was gained and kept. The Dutchmen elsewhere, in vast masses, were fighting hard with guns and pom-poms, and at close of day had assumed so threatening an attitude that General French was telegraphed for, and the troops were ordered to sleep on the ground they had gained, and prepare to renew the attack at dawn. General French arrived from Thabanchu the same night, and next morning (the 1st of May) hostilities were resumed.

Again the enemy, led by Botha, fought doggedly, even brilliantly, but the troops, after some warm fighting, succeeded in routing him and forcing a passage to the north. In the operations General Hamilton was assisted by Broadwood's brigade of cavalry and the 8th Hussars under Colonel Clowes, whose gallantry helped to harass the enemy's rear and forced them eventually to evacuate their position. Bruce Hamilton's brigade of infantry also did excellent work. The final stroke to the enemy's rout was effected by the Gordons and Canadians, and two companies of the Shropshire Light Infantry. These came within 200 yards of the foe, and with a ringing cheer launched themselves boldly at the Dutchmen's front—so boldly, so dashing indeed, that at the sheer hint of the coming collision the Boers had scampered. Promptly the 8th Hussars charged into the flying fugitives, and forty prisoners were "bagged." Guns were then galloped on the evacuated position and shells were sent after the dispersing hordes.

The enemy lost twelve killed and forty wounded. Among the former was a German officer and two Frenchmen, and among the latter a Russian who commanded the Foreign Legion. The British wounded were Captain Lord Kensington, Household Cavalry; Major H. Alexander, 10th Hussars; Captain A. Hart, 1st East Surrey Regiment; Captain Buckle, 2nd Royal West Kent. Captain Cheyne, Kitchener's Horse, was missing.

On the 2nd, after the dashing assault of the Thaba plateau and defeat of the Boers, a day's halt was ordered at Jacobsrust, as General Hamilton's force had been incessantly fighting for over ten days. Lord Roberts's plan in the Free State was now nearly complete. His proposition was to hold with an adequate force the whole of the front from left to right—from Karee Siding, Krantz Kraal, Springfield, the Waterworks, Thabanchu, Leeuw River Mills, and Ladybrand—thus pressing the Boers steadily up and up, till resistance should be pushed to the narrowest limits. Fighting here and there continued, but the sweeping process preparatory to the great forward move was being very thoroughly accomplished. Reinforcements now arrived, and General Hamilton's force, which in refer-



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WEST SURREY  
(Adjutant)

EAST SURREY  
(Sergeant-Major)

Photo by Gregory & Co., London



## From Thabanchu to Winburg

ence to Lord Roberts's advance took its place as the army of the right flank, was composed as follows:—

Infantry.....	{ 19th Brigade.	{ Smith-Dorrien.
	{ 21st Brigade	{ Bruce Hamilton.
Cavalry .....	2nd Cavalry Brigade	Broadwood.
	{ 3 Batteries F.A.	
Artillery .....	{ 2 Batteries H.A.	{ Waldron.
	{ 2 5-in. Guns	

On the 4th the enemy, ubiquitous, were found again in great numbers at Roelofsfontein. They formed a barrier to the onward passage of the troops, and approaching them with a view to strengthening that barrier came more Boers fleeing from Brandfort. There was no time to be lost, so, with prodigious haste General Broadwood with two squadrons of Guards Cavalry and two of the 10th Hussars galloped to the scene, and threw a formidable wedge between the allies. Thereupon such Boers as were hastening to fill the gap came into collision with the cavalry. These, supported by Kitchener's Horse, who had dashed nimbly into the fray, succeeded in defeating the Dutchmen and forcing them back discomfited. Their neatly arranged plan of campaign had failed, and realising the impossibility of joining forces, the Boers set spurs to their horses and made for the drift, speeded in their mad career by shells from the batteries of the Horse Artillery. But the brilliant cavalry feat was costly. Lord Airlie, whose dash and daring had continually almost approached recklessness, was injured, so also was Lieutenant the Hon. C. H. Wyndham, while Lieutenant Rose (Royal Horse Guards), the gallant A.D.C. to the late General Symons, was mortally wounded. The unfortunate officer was felled with many bullets from some sharpshooters who were marking the crest of the ridge held by the British. Most of the losses were sustained by the cavalry, whose splendid action saved much time and possibly many fierce engagements on the line of march.

A Scots colonist who owned an estate near Winburg, which had the misfortune to be situated in the very midst of the beligerents, gave an interesting account of the days directly preceding the occupation of Winburg, when a series of conflicts had been taking place along the road from Thabanchu. From the 2nd of May and onwards small parties of fleeing Boers and German free-lances had been seen escaping from the British and seeking cover in the kopjes near Welkom:—

"The Boers, nearly 4000 strong, with thirteen guns, occupied the hills round Welkom; the British, under Generals Ian Hamilton and Broadwood, at Verkeerdi Vlei, two hours distant, also General Colville with the Ninth Division, and General Hector MacDonald with the Highland Brigade, at Os Spruit, two and a half hours farther east on the Brandfort side. Cannon firing started

## The Transvaal War

at 7 A.M., and continued for two or three hours, Naval guns, Armstrongs, Howitzers, Maxim-Nordenfeldts, &c. &c., all booming together. We heard the rifle-firing quite distinctly. About ten o'clock the Boers began to give way, and arrived here, about 1000 of them, with six cannon. We supplied them with water and milk, &c., and thanked God to hear them say they did not intend making a stand. Across the river they moved through the drift very swiftly—guns, waggons, transport, men, horses—all in fairly good order. Just as they got through, the Boers up on the Brandfort direction began to give way, and shells from the British cannon burst repeatedly among them. This went on for about one hour, when a grand stampede set in, and the flight and confusion and bursting shells was a sight never to be forgotten. In the flight the drift got jammed up. One cannon upset in the drift and blocked the traffic. Then they tore up here past the house, and got through at the top drift. How they all got through is still a mystery to me. Suddenly a shell from the large naval gun burst down at the mill. It made a terrific explosion, and shook both house and store. The British had meantime worked round, and got some cannon up to my camp (the Kaffirs' huts), and began shelling the flying Boers, as my camp commands the road for miles. The cannon-firing was simply awful, and nearly deafened the lot of us; even things inside the house shook."

By-and-by when the fire slackened, to the delight of the British party, some 500 of the 17th Lancers were seen approaching, their scouts in advance. Quickly they were assured that they were riding into the arms of friends. The Scotsman mounted to the roof of his house, and there, with the white pinafore of one of his bairns in hand, he waved a frantic welcome. The signal was returned, and joy and relief almost overcame him. Then followed some pleasant experiences, for the Colonist played the host to a distinguished multitude. He said:—

"On the arrival of the Lancers we supplied them with water and tea, but they pushed on, and the officer in charge asked me to go with him to General Broadwood. This I did, and after satisfying him as to the roads, &c., he thanked me and asked me for the use of the house for General Hamilton and staff, which I said I would give. As I returned to the house on foot a wounded officer rode up to me. This was Colonel the Earl of Airlie, in command of the 17th (12th?) Lancers, wounded in elbow. He stayed with us until next day, and a finer and more homely man I have never met. Notwithstanding his wound, he insisted on helping to put Tommy to bed, and, although the house was soon full of lords, generals, &c., and the staffs of two divisions, he helped Florrie (the host's wife) in every way he could. Lady Airlie is in Bloemfontein, and he returned thither. He gave us his Kirriemuir Castle address, and insists on us coming to see him. About sundown the General and staff arrived, among them Major Count Gleichen, Smith-Dorrien, Duke of Marlborough, and a lot of others. Winston Churchill also was with them. The scene that night at Welkom will never be forgotten by us. Fourteen thousand men bivouacked on the farm, camp fires for miles around. About seven o'clock the Highland Brigade arrived in the distance, pipes playing. It is quite dark here at 6 P.M., so you can picture to yourself the scene. With the arrival of MacDonald's Highlanders the total army on Welkom was between 19,000 and 20,000 men. The

## From Thabanchu to Winburg

house here was in great brilliancy. The Union Jack was planted in front, and officers were arriving every few minutes with despatches. A telegraph line is laid by the troops as they move on, so we had a direct wire from the house here to Bloemfontein."

Delightful was it to the Scotsman to find himself specially introduced to General Hector MacDonald, and see the brow company of Highlanders march past his house. But their appearance was far from spruce, indeed the whole army was begrimed with dust and wear and tear, honourable filth on their bronzed and sweating faces, for which a Walt Whitman—had such been there—would have felt impelled to hug them. The sad part was the death of Captain Ernest Rose (Royal Horse Guards) who had been wounded in the previous fighting. The Colonist, writing of the affair narrated: "When the news was brought to the General and staff at nine o'clock at night that Rose had died of his wounds they were all fearfully cut up. He was buried at midnight, just at the back of the house here on the other side of road, about 100 yards from where I now sit. The General asked me to promise him to have the grave built in and to look after it, as it would be a fearful blow to the officer's father, Lord Rose. He had only two sons, and the other one died of fever last month in Bloemfontein." He went on to say: "The great bulk of the troops had gone forward, only MacDonald and the Highland Brigade remained behind, and they were encamped over at the station, so there are still about 5000 men in town. I found Major Count Gleichen, who had stayed the night at Welkom, was provost marshal, and Lieutenant Rymand, intelligence officer."

At dawn on the 6th the march to Winburg was continued, and the troops prepared themselves again to meet with stout resistance from the hordes which had been pressed across the drift. But when the main army neared the outskirts of the place they were nowhere to be seen. The fact was that the 7th Mounted Infantry and the Hampshires had done a smart piece of work, "off their own bat" as it were, and forced the congregating Federals to think better of any plan of resistance to the entry into Winburg which they had made. The little affair was concisely described by an officer who took part in it:—

"The officer commanding the Mounted Infantry Corps ordered the 7th Battalion Mounted Infantry (which was leading the advance on the right) to race with the enemy for the occupation of the big hill, about 3000 feet high, overlooking Winburg, which lies between the approaches to the town from the south and from the east, both of which it entirely commands. The Boers were approaching this hill from the north and the east, and had they succeeded in occupying it, we should have had great difficulty in driving them off it and capturing Winburg. But the Mounted Infantry got there before them. As soon as they received the order to try and occupy it, the 7th Battalion

## The Transvaal War

Mounted Infantry (having extricated themselves from the deep ravines near the river) raced for the hill, the Hampshire squadron making for the point overlooking Winburg, the Borderers and Lincolns supporting them on the right. When half-way up the hill they jumped off their horses and scrambled to the top, and, meeting with no opposition, made their way across the open summit to the rocky edge overlooking Winburg. There a wonderful sight met their view. The whole Boer force, about 5000 or 6000 strong, and several miles in length, was seen trekking slowly past Winburg in a northerly direction. The road they were moving by passed within about 2000 yards of this point of the hill, so the Hampshires (who were at first only twelve strong, the remainder having been delayed crossing the ravines) opened fire for all they were worth to make the enemy think that the hill was strongly occupied. This considerably hastened the enemy's movements, and the rear-guard commandos which had yet to pass near the hill thought better of it, and went round another way behind some high hills out of shot."

At noon a staff officer under a flag of truce summoned the Mayor of the town to surrender, promising to protect private property and pay for such foodstuffs as might be required. Thereupon was enacted a curious drama. While the magnates were putting their heads together and discussing the position, Botha and some five hundred of his mercenaries came on the scene. The commandant bounced that he would not surrender without fighting, and accused Captain Balfour (who had offered to let such Free Staters as should surrender their arms return to their farms) of attempting to suborn his burghers. Botha frantically insisted on the arrest of the staff officer, the staff officer as furiously flourished his flag of truce. The Boers pointed their rifles, the women screamed, the townsfolk gabbled, and general turmoil prevailed. In the end the citizens whose property, so to speak, lay in the palm of the British hand, preferred the Mayor's discretion to Botha's valour, and that warrior, swelling with indignation, and followed by his equally bombastic "braves," shook the dust of the town off their shoes and galloped to the north.

At night General Hamilton reached the town, where he was joined by General Colville's Division, which was marching from Waterval towards Heilbron, and was thereupon directed to follow the leading column at a distance of ten miles.

The advance of the army is arranged, as some one described, not as a continuous movement but as a caterpillar-like form of progress, the first part of the move being a species of advance, the second a drawing up of the tail end of the creature. Thus the vast machine is carried from point to point, the halting-places being usually at positions of strategic consequence. The Boers had run away from their first positions at Brandfort and on the Vet; the second ones on the Zand, the Valsch, and the Rhenoster were now to be purged of the Republicans. It was necessary before going

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THE GREAT ADVANCE: LORD ROBERT'S COLUMN CROSSING THE SAND RIVER DRIFT

Facsimile of a Sketch by Melton Prior, War Artist

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## Towards the Zand River

forward to make a three days' halt, during which the tail end of the monster—the railway—was put in working order, and supplies collected and brought up. The enemy's position on the Zand was reconnoitred, and on the 9th the advance was resumed, General Ian Hamilton hurrying to assist in the operations at the Zand River, the Highland Brigade being left in possession of Winburg.

### TOWARDS THE ZAND RIVER TO KROONSTADT

By the 9th of May, as we know, General Pole-Carew's and General Tucker's Divisions and General Ian Hamilton's Column (moving from Winburg), with Naval and Royal Garrison Artillery guns, and four brigades of cavalry, had concentrated at Welgelegen. The enemy, pushed back on all sides, now held the opposite bank of the Zand River in force; but nevertheless it was decided that the army would cross, and cross it did. The crossing was accomplished on the 10th, the enemy being routed from all his strong positions. According to the correspondent of the *Times*, the scheme for the general advance had been planned as follows: "A concentration of the line of advance was to take place at Kroonstadt. General Ian Hamilton, after leaving a brigade at Winburg, was to advance on the right flank with his Mounted Infantry, Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade, and the 19th Brigade, *via* Ventersburg. The main advance with Lord Roberts was to be made by the Eleventh Division, supported by Gordon's Cavalry Brigade, the connection between the railway and right flank being kept by General Tucker's Division. The left was entrusted to General French with the 1st and 4th Cavalry Brigades and General Hutton's Brigade of Mounted Infantry. As the left in all probability would find it necessary to act independently, the Mounted Infantry belonging to General Tucker became attached to the main column for screening purposes."

The enemy, some 6000 strong with 15 guns, was found to be posted on a series of hills running diagonally against the east side of the Zand, but after some vigorous shelling by General Tucker they evacuated their main position by the river, blew up various culverts that lay in front of the British force, and prepared to make a vigorous stand against the Mounted Infantry advancing in the centre. These, having debouched on the plain on the north of the river were promptly assailed by guns from the hills to the right, but they still pushed on towards the west of the railway, while a battery of Horse Artillery tackled the region whence came the hostile shells. The scene of the fight was dotted with farmhouses and native kraals, and here numerous parties of skirmishers were knowingly concealed. The 8th Mounted Infantry Corps, dismounting, advanced in ex-

## The Transvaal War

tended order across the nullah-riven plain under a heavy shell fire, while the British guns barked merrily and wrought devastation among the Boer guns, which were hastily scurried away, pursued now by the 4th Mounted Infantry, who, full of excitement, galloped off to capture the retiring treasures, and in so doing ran almost into the arms of some 500 Boers. These, rushing from ambush, forced them back on their supports. But the fire from a well-directed Maxim, and from Lumsden's Horse, who had captured a hill and stuck to it amid a hurricane of Boer missiles, served to rout the Dutchmen and send them after their guns and convoy, which unfortunately, by this time, had been got safely away.

Of General Ian Hamilton's part in the proceedings on the right an eye-witness contributed to the *Morning Post* an interesting account:—

"At daybreak on May 9 Ian Hamilton's column left their bivouac at Klipfontein and marched north to Boemplatz Farm without resistance. About mid-day the Mounted Infantry, who were a mile or two ahead of the column, on topping the ridges overlooking Zand River, came under fire of the enemy concealed in the dongas near the river, and on the hills beyond, and in the kopjes on our right. They remained there all the afternoon, peppering and being peppered in return. The veldt here was alive with buck and hartebeest, and they were so tame that herds of them grazed between the Mounted Infantry screen and the main body. This was too much for some officers of the C.I.V., and they left their bivouac near the main body, about a mile in the rear, and let drive at the buck.

"Meanwhile the Hampshire Squadron of Mounted Infantry, which were playing hide and seek with their brother Boers, began to wonder how it was that bullets were coming from their rear as well as from their front. When they discovered that these bullets from the rear were intended for buck, they sent down a message, the language of which was hardly parliamentary, to the would-be buck slayers, and threatened to send a volley at the buck themselves. More Boer commandos were seen to be arriving from the east towards dusk, so there seemed to be every prospect of a warm time the next day, especially on the right flank. Up till now Ian Hamilton's column had been working quite independently, and had marched north from Thabanchu as a flying column, but this afternoon we were acquainted with the presence of another force on our left by seeing Lord Roberts's balloon in the air about eight miles away. That Lord Roberts met with but slight resistance may be accounted for by the fact that Ian Hamilton's column away on his right was always a few miles ahead of him, and threatened the enemy's flank. Lord Roberts's force had been marching north along the line of railway, and now the two columns were converging with a view to reaching Kroonstadt together.

"Those on outpost duty that night heard the rumbling of waggons for many hours in the vicinity of the enemy. Evidently their transport was being moved out of harm's way. The night was bitterly cold, and many of those on outpost duty had nothing but greatcoats to keep them warm, some of the waggons not having yet arrived. At daybreak our 'Long Toms' made excellent practice at what looked like a Boer laager on the slope of the hill across the river to the north. At about 7 P.M. the battle commenced in earnest, and

## Towards the Zand River

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Boers Blowing up  
Railway Bridge

Lord Kitchener.

Lord Roberts.

Shelling the Boers'  
Rear-guard.



LORD ROBERTS AND HIS STAFF WATCHING THE BOERS' RETREAT FROM ZAND RIVER; GENERAL FRENCH IN PURSUIT  
ON THE EXTREME LEFT. (Facsimile of a Sketch by Melton Prior, War Artist.)

## The Transvaal War

the crack of our rifles, the double crack of the enemy's, the barking of Maxims, the 'pom-pom' of the Vickers-Maxims, and the boom of the 'Long Toms' were heard all along the line. Our front must have been ten or fifteen miles along the Zand River, because Roberts's column was now a few miles to our left, and French's Cavalry Division was on Roberts's left; but for reasons mentioned above the Boers showed a bold front to Ian Hamilton's column only. The enemy kept up a steady fire from the positions they had occupied during the night, some Boers in the dongas having advanced to within a short distance of our firing line.

"As the day wore on, reinforcements appeared to arrive for the enemy, and they made a determined effort to turn our right. Here they were opposed by Kitchener's Horse, who were hard pressed, and had to be hurriedly reinforced by the New Zealanders. On the extreme right the enemy now became very bold, and report says that the sergeant-major of Kitchener's Horse made a bull's-eye on a Boer's head at only fifteen yards' distance. All this time we had kept the enemy at bay without the aid of a single gun, though they had been firing at us with common shell and shrapnel, but to our great joy in the afternoon four field-guns came to our assistance, and proceeded to deluge the kopjes and dongas with shrapnel. Brother Boer now finding matters getting rather unpleasant slunk out of the dongas and off the kopjes in groups of ten and twenty in an easterly direction, and now the enemy having been pressed back all along the line, the 7th Mounted Infantry, Kitchener's Horse, and the New Zealanders were left as a rear-guard, and the main body moved on five or six miles. At dark we followed them, and crossed the Zand River unmolested, and bivouacked on the other side of the drift on the position which had been all day occupied by the Boers. It was reported that the following day the bodies of fifty or sixty of the enemy were found in the Zand River dongas, and many more on the kopjes on the right, so the losses were not all on our side."

The following casualties occurred in General Ian Hamilton's column during the day's fight: Second Lieutenant R. E. Paget, 1st Royal Sussex Regiment, wounded; Captain Leonard Head, East Lancashire Regiment, dangerously wounded (since dead).

Meanwhile General French, whose object was to turn the enemy's right flank and capture Ventersburg station by nightfall, had also a brisk encounter with the Boers, which involved some loss of life, particularly among the Inniskillings. The 1st Brigade, under General Porter, advanced towards a kopje, which was captured by the Inniskillings. Here they were confronted by an advancing khaki-clad regiment, said to be the newly raised Afrikaner Horse, which was mistaken for British troops. Before they could be recognised they had opened fire on the hills, and so violently assailed those holding it, that the Dragoons were forced to make for their horses, leaving behind them fourteen slain and many wounded. Guns and the dashing Canadians were sent in support of General Porter, while General French continued to develop his flanking movement. The 4th Brigade (8th Hussars and 7th Dragoons) were deployed on the right of the enemy, and grandly charged a body

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THE SURRENDER OF KROONSTADT: TROOPS MARCHING PAST LORD ROBERTS AND STAFF

Drawing by S. Begg, from a Sketch by Melton Prior, War Artist

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## Towards the Zand River

some 300 strong. They, however, suffered considerably in consequence, for while rallying, the squadrons were fiercely fired on by such of the Dutchmen who had succeeded in bolting to cover, dismounting and firing, before the assailants could get out of range. The object of the charge was nevertheless effected, and by nightfall, by a series of tactical evolutions—a species of military impromptu resulting from the exigencies of the situation—the enemy's flank had been turned, and the Cavalry Division was safely disposed at Graspan. Unfortunately, the casualties during this movement were heavy, some 200 slain, wounded, and missing.

It was reported that a party of the British, going up to a kraal on which a white flag was hoisted, were suddenly attacked by a large number of the enemy. Two officers, Captain Haig, of the 6th Dragoons, and Lieutenant Wilkinson, 1st Australian Horse, were taken prisoners, and several men were unaccounted for. During the day's fight, Captain C. K. Elworthy, 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers) was killed. Among the wounded were: 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers)—Lieutenant R. H. Collis; Lieutenant M. M. Moncrieff. Tasmanian Mounted Infantry—Major C. Cameron.

On the evening of the 10th, the British Army, converging in the direction of Kroonstadt, occupied a front of some twenty miles, of which the left centre (Pole-Carew's Division) was at Ventersburg Road. Ventersburg Siding had been demolished by the departing Boers, or rather by their mercenaries, the Irish-Americans, but the Boers here made no show of opposition. They were very near at hand, however, for report said the valorous Steyn had but a few hours previously been wasting tears and threats on recalcitrant burghers in the district, burghers who, now refusing to fight any more, hung about for the purpose of laying down their arms.

On the 11th, the army moved on some twelve miles to Geneva Siding. In front, the left wing (French's Cavalry) flew ever well ahead, while the right centre (Tucker's Division) marched slightly in the rear, and the right wing (Hamilton's Column) worked its way onwards in the direction of Lindley. By dusk, General French had seized a drift over the Valshe River, below Kroonstadt, just in time to prevent the passage being opposed by the enemy. The manœuvre was cleverly managed, and in most inconvenient circumstances, for the transport having gone back to the Zand River, men and horses had been already a day without food. But rapidity was the word, and the deed kept pace with it. Both brigades were advanced as swiftly as possible, and divided each towards a convenient drift, scurrying to get there before the enemy could be informed of the direction taken. The result was, that when the foe, strong in men and guns, debouched from the scrub-country in the region of Kroonstadt, they were saluted with heartiness by the 4th Brigade,

## The Transvaal War

who had taken possession of the coveted vantage ground. The Boers retreated, and gathered themselves together to guard the road to the town; but General French made a rapid detour, which they saw might outflank them, whereupon they discreetly withdrew.

At night a gallant effort was made by that indefatigable officer, Major Hunter Weston, R.E., to cut the railway communications in rear of the enemy. Escorted by a squadron of cavalry, and accompanied by Burnham the American scout and eight smart sappers, he proceeded as usual, under cover of darkness, towards the line. Here, however, he came in touch with the Boers, and his troopers charged the Dutch patrol and captured them. Then leaving his escort, he, the scout and sappers, after much hiding in the moonlight and groping in nullahs, reached the line through the enemy's convoy and launched the explosive into the midst of the Dutchmen, causing considerable panic among them. He, however, was defeated in his main object, though the hairbreadth escapes and deeds of cool-headed pluck accomplished during the small hours of the night make a long tale, both exciting and soul-stirring.

On Saturday the advance was resumed. The town of Boschrand, some eight miles below Kroonstadt, was found deserted, the Boers before the ubiquitous French having sped as an arrow from the bow. The Dutchmen had taken care to put a good deal of country between them and the British, for, after reconnaissance towards Kroonstadt had been made, it was found that though they had been seen the night before encamped from Kroonstadt to Honing Spruit they had melted away, and had evidently decided that they would make no further stand till the British arrived within the confines of the Transvaal. President Steyn had already taken himself off to Lindley, and Commandant Botha had departed with his Transvaal burghers to prepare for a big fight on the Vaal.

The entry of Lord Roberts into Kroonstadt was a fine spectacle, all the men, despite their hard, 128-mile march being in splendid condition, and wearing on their faces the air of honest satisfaction at work accomplished—pride in themselves and in their admired Chief. The procession was headed by Lord Roberts's bodyguards, who were all of them Colonials. Following them came the staff and foreign attachés, then trooped in the North Somerset Company of the Imperial Yeomanry, a stalwart and bronzed host; after which marched General Pole-Carew's Division, consisting of the Guards, the 18th Brigade, the Naval Brigade, the 83rd, 84th, and 85th Batteries, two 5-inch guns manned by Royal Artillerymen, and the 12th Company of Royal Engineers. The sight was a most imposing one, and the vision of troops apparently innumerable streaming through the streets highly impressed the Boers, who many of them



## Towards the Zand River

had entered on the war with the highest confidence in their military prowess and the inferiority of the British as a fighting race.

Mr. Steyn, it was said, before his departure the previous night had used in vain, persuasions, threats, and even violence to the burghers in the effort to rally them. An enterprising photographer went so far as to take a portrait of the late President in act of kicking and cuffing his followers—"to put valour into them," so it was explained. They, however, turned their backs on the smiter, and many of them surrendered to Lord Roberts. Mr. Steyn had announced that in future Lindley, situated between Kroonstadt and



KROONSTADT ON THE VALSCH RIVER.

Bethlehem, would become the seat of the Free State Government, and thither fled, knowing in his heart that the days of the Free State were numbered. The Transvaalers, disgusted with the "Orange" men, had refused any longer to fight in the Free State, and took themselves off to the Vaal River; while, on the other hand, the Free Staters, furious with the Transvaalers, charged them with having made them into a "cat's-paw" and then left them in the lurch. The valiant Federals were, in fact, at loggerheads, and many surrendered, being only too thankful to part company with their quondam allies.

The troops halted at Kroonstadt for ten days to recuperate, and while they enjoyed their well-earned rest, stirring events took place elsewhere.

## CHAPTER V

### MAFEKING

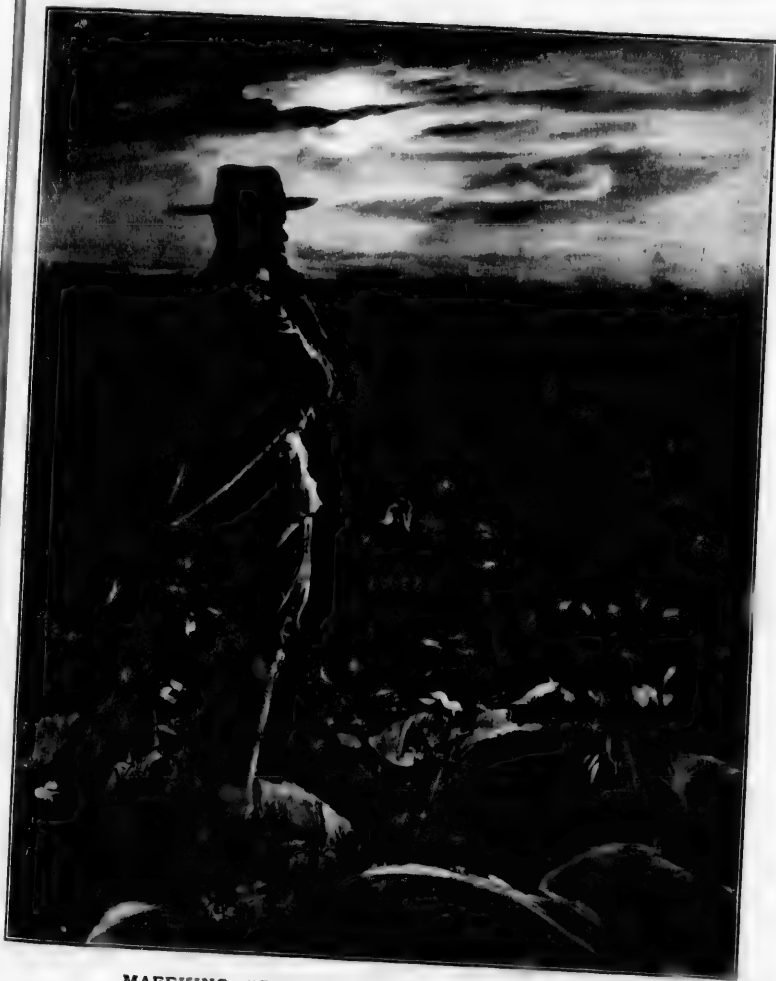
THERE was an immense amount of undiscovered genius in Mafeking till Colonel Baden-Powell brought it to the front. The art of making ball-cartridges out of blank, and the manufacture of gunpowder, cannon, shells, fuses, postage stamps, bank notes, and a strategetic railway, served to occupy and amuse those whose days were an unending round of monotony. The Colonel's vigilance, that in other times had earned for him the Matabele title of "Mpeesi, the wolf that never sleeps," communicated itself to all, and it was to this general spirit of alertness that the success of the garrison's sturdy defence was due. But on their hearts despond was setting its seal; young faces were becoming lined with anxiety, and even those whose dramatic powers enabled them to feign merriment were conscious that the effort was becoming even more pathetic than resignation to their fate.

Young Eloff, who had gallantly volunteered to subdue Mafeking or die in the attempt, beguiled the interval in preparing for his feat of chivalry by indulging in a mild form of jocosity. He informed Colonel Baden-Powell that he had heard of his Sabbath concerts, tournaments, and cricket matches, and would be glad, as it was dull outside, to come in and participate in them. The Colonel replied in the same vein—begged to postpone a return match till the present one was finished, and suggested as they were now 200 not out, and Snyman and Cronje had been unsuccessful, a further change of bowling might be advantageous! In reality the young Boer was racking his brains with plans for the future, getting information regarding the forts and defences, and deciding when the time came for assault to do the thing with a flash and a flourish!

And his ambition was not entirely groundless, for things were coming to a sorry pass, and the tension grew daily more severe. It was necessary to be eternally pushing out trenches and capturing forts in order to secure grazing and breathing space, but this action had the result of so extending the lines, that the problem of how to protect ten miles of perimeter against some 2000 Boers, with only 700 men, became harder than ever to grapple with. Fortunately there was still an inner line, but even this was difficult to

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**MAFEKING: "THE WOLF THAT NEVER SLEEPS"**

Drawing by W. Hatherell, R.I., from materials supplied by Major F. D. Baillie,  
Correspondent of the *Morning Post*

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## Mafeking

guard, now that the gallant seven hundred were reduced in stamina by long privation and immediate famine.

A great deal of irritation was caused by pilfering and house-breaking that went on. As the men were in the trenches and the women in the women's laagers, all the ill-conditioned vagabonds, the human scum that had trailed from the Rand and Buluwayo, at the hint of loot "made hay" while there was no police at liberty to cope with them. Every hand in Mafeking had been required, and the police had been forced to become soldiers, defenders of the state and not of private property. And well they had done their work! For over six months some 2000 to 3000 Boers had found fodder here for their eight guns, including a 9-pounder. They had been kept stationary, and thus prevented from combining with the Tuli column, or invading Rhodesia, or joining forces with any of the aggressive commandos in the south. And this wonderful arrest had been accomplished by men who at the beginning of hostilities were practically unarmed and unfortified. It was no marvel, therefore, that President Kruger and his advisers, who had started their fell work with such confidence, now began to wag their heads in acridity and dismay. The overweening bumptiousness of the several commandants who, full of buoyant and bellicose aspirations, had attempted the subjugation of Mafeking, had been their undoing. These had become the laughing-stock even of their own people.

Commandant Cronje early in the war had been so convinced of his ability to capture Mafeking that he had caused a proclamation to be printed annexing the district to the South African Republic. But he had found it a disastrous place, and had left it with some loss of prestige, as had many others who had attempted "to do the trick" and failed. Until this date the Boers had expended considerably over 100 tons of ammunition, lost over 1000 men killed and wounded, and had four guns disabled, yet nothing was accomplished.

Commandant Eloff was then specially deputed by Kruger to pulverise "B.P.", and came to his work in high spirits accompanied by a man—a deserter—who, having served as a trooper in the Protectorate Regiment, was well acquainted with the plans of the fortifications and the military customs of the place. Of course, it was the object of the youthful commandant to make an attack as speedily as possible, for rumours of approaching relief threatened to put an end to his machinations and spoil his ambitious scheme. He knew that a relief column had reached and was advancing from Setlagoli, and that what had to be done must be done now or never. Still he had a notion that after passing Kraaipan any journey for troops would be arid, waterless, and discomforting, and believed that the column

## The Transvaal War

might be cut off before it could offer serious opposition to his plans.

Commandant Snyman, on his side, was as depressed as his colleague was jaunty. He was scarcely flattered to find a youngster determining to solve a problem which for a considerable time had defeated him, and therefore at the onset, in regard to the momentous plans for attack, the two commandants were scarcely at one. The rift widened as affairs developed. Indeed, in letters which subsequently passed between the pair, it was discovered that Eloff, to use his own words, "had been preparing to trip him up for years." This Snyman must evidently have known, and determined to show—as he did when the opportunity offered—that "two could play at that game." At this time, however, though the trail of the green and yellow monster might have been seen winding about the Boer laagers, there was no suspicion that when combined action against the common enemy—the British—would be needed the older commandant would fail the younger one.

Curiously enough, though at the instance of the Boers the Sunday truce had been agreed upon, they were the first to break through the compact. On the 6th of May, while the usual auction sales were taking place, and the ladies were cautiously doing their weekly shopping, an affair of some moment since prices ruled high, the rattle of musketry betrayed that something was wrong. It was then discovered that the Boers had fired on the horse guard, killing Trooper Franch, and wounding three horses, and causing a stampede of the herd towards their own lines. Fortunately the ever-wary B.P. kept a machine gun in the valley, and a sharp engagement took place, but nevertheless the Boers succeeded in capturing some of the all too precious cattle. The affair was soon over and the terrified ladies continued their shopping, but the incident was sufficient to demonstrate that soon, if the Boers should fail to succeed by fair means, they would have recourse to foul.

At last, on the 12th of May, came the great, the long-looked-for assault. It was not yet dawn, the stars were still blinking pallidly, when an ominous crackling awoke the town. It came from the east, where rosy tints of the sunrise were beginning to show themselves. At once every one was astir. The alarm bugle blared out, bells sounded, forms all sketchily attired, some still in pyjamas, rushed to their posts.

Though the bullets came from the east, whizzing and phutting into the market-square, Colonel Baden-Powell, with his natural astuteness, declared that the real attack would come not from there but from the west, the corner where stood the stadt of the Baralong. All got their horses ready, armed themselves with whatever came to hand, and fled precipitately out into the nipping air of the

## Mafeking

morning. For an hour this brisk fusillade continued, then at about 5.30 there was a lull. The sun now was slowly beginning to rise, reddening the east with vivid blushes. But the colonel's eyes were fixed on the west, and there sure enough was what at first seemed a reflection of the sunrise—a tremendous flaming mirage surmounted by dense volumes of smoke, and accompanied by a weird stentorian crackling commingled with yells discordant, and despairing lamentations from the direction of the native village. There was no doubt about it, the stadt was ablaze! whether by accident or design none at that moment could decide. Away went the guns, after them the Bechuanaland Rifles, rushing to the fray; and then on the morning breeze came a strange sound—cheers—but not British cheers—cheers that sent a thrill of horror through all who anxiously awaited the upshot of the encounter. It was scarcely to be credited, but it was the truth! The enemy had arrived! They were already in the fort that was held by Colonel Hore and his staff! They were not 500 yards off! At this time, though the bullets from the east fell less thickly, those from the west began to pour in, and through this cross fire the besieged rushed to their several destinations. Women, distracted, fled hither and thither; men shot and shouted and gave orders. Columns of smoke and cascades of sparks told the tale of conflagration, and natives scared, babbling, panic-stricken, tore through the streets.

There was just cause for alarm. The evil hour had come. The Boers had reached the orderly-room which stood outside the Kaffirs' stadt. The clerk, finding himself surrounded, hurriedly telephoned to the Colonel, "The Boers are all in among us." Such news it was almost impossible to credit, and the Colonel put his ear to the telephone. Then the sound of Dutch voices convinced him of the horrible truth. The next thing was a message saying that the Boers had taken Colonel Hore and his force prisoners, and that the British were powerless to help them. Telephonic communication was immediately destroyed with wire-pliers, but a state of consternation prevailed. It was perfectly true that Colonel Hore was powerless, as with his small force of twenty-three all told it was impossible to guard the many outbuildings that surrounded him against such overwhelming numbers, particularly as at first in the dusk it had been impossible to distinguish whether the advancing men were foes or friends.

All—young and old, men and even women—were madly rushing to the front, all eager to check the Boers in their wild rush forward. The prisoners in the jail were let loose and armed to join in the common duty, small boys seized weapons, shovels or pokers for want of anything better, and invited themselves to help to turn the invaders out. A singular cheeriness prevailed; the sniff of battle

## The Transvaal War

exhilarated, intoxicated them; they swore to protect Mafeking or die in the attempt!

Meanwhile the dashing Eloff, who so long had boasted that he would bring Mafeking to her knees, had at last achieved something of a success. The fort was seized. He and his band of 700 men had advanced up the Molopo, burnt the stadt as a signal to his allies, and thus made an entry. The storming party was composed mostly of foreigners, and numbered some 300 all told. Many of them were Frenchmen, who, when they emerged from Hidden Hollow and rushed on Colonel Hore's fort, were heard to be shouting "Fashoda! Fashoda!" while such Boers as could speak English were sent in front to roar "Hip, hip, hurrah! Relieved at last!" so as to deceive the besieged with the idea that the relief column was arriving. Behind were 500 burghers, with Snyman, in support; but when they heard the firing they discreetly waited to see the result, and through their discretion Eloff eventually lost what he had gained. The Baralongs, whose stadt was burning, and who themselves were burning for revenge, had permitted some 300 of the party to seize the outlying forts, and then, with an astuteness peculiar to them, decided they would get between the Dutchmen and their supports, and "kraal them up like cattle." But this was not done in a moment.

To return. When the storming party had reached the fort, they broke up into three. One hundred and fifty of them attacked the fort and seized it, together with the Colonel and twenty-three men of the Protectorate Regiment, who, mistaking them in the dusk of the early dawn for friends, had not fired. When they found out their mistake, it was too late.

Regarding Colonel Hore's lamentable position and his surrender, the correspondent of the *Times*, who had the ill luck as a man and the good luck as a journalist to get taken prisoner, said: "Commandant Eloff demanded the unconditional surrender of the twenty-three men who were established at the fort, an order which, had Colonel Hore refused, implied that every man with him would be shot. The exigencies of the situation had thus suddenly thrown upon the shoulders of this very gallant officer an almost overwhelming responsibility. It was impossible to withdraw to the town. Such a movement would have meant retirement over 700 yards of open, level ground without a particle of cover, and with a force of 300 of the enemy immediately in the rear. For a moment Colonel Hore had considered, but realising that escape was impossible, that indeed the Boers were all round him, he ordered the surrender, accepting the responsibility of such an act in the hope of saving the lives of the men who were with him. But the situation imperatively demanded this action in consequence of events over which he had no control.



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LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR FREDERICK CARRINGTON, K.C.M.G.

Photo by Elliot & Fry, London

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## Mafeking

It was, perhaps, a moment as pathetic and great as any in his career, which, honourable and distinguished as it has been, has brought to him some six medals. The surrender was effected at 5.25 A.M., and the news of such a catastrophe did not tend to relieve the gravity of the situation. With the Boers in the fort and in occupation of the stadt, it was necessary so to arrange our operations that any junction between the stadt and the fort would be impossible. At the same time we were compelled to prevent those Boers who were in the stadt from cutting their way through to the main body of the enemy. The situation was indeed complex, and throughout the remainder of the day the skirmishing in the stadt and the repulse of the feints of the enemy's main body, delivered in different directions against the outposts, were altogether apart from the siege which we were conducting within our own investment. From the town very heavy rifle fire was directed upon the fort, which the Boers in that quarter returned with spirit and determination. But the position in the stadt had become acute, since behind our outposts and our inner chain of forts, which are situated upon its exterior border, were a rollicking, roving band of 400 Boers, who for the time being were indulging in pillage and destruction wherever it was possible.

For those inside the fort the tension was extreme. Colonel Hore, with Captain Singleton, Veterinary Lieutenant Dunlop Smith, fifteen non-commissioned officers and men of the Protectorate Regiment, Captain Williams and three men of the South Africa Police, and some native servants, were packed in by a crowd of the enemy, while a babel of tongues—German, French, Italian, Dutch—made a clamour that obfuscated the senses. Many of the Boers were busy looting, breaking open anything that came to hand in the officers' quarters, notwithstanding the remonstrances of their allies, the foreigners. Trooper Hayes, a deserter from the Protectorate Regiment, who was well acquainted with the fortifications, and had led Eloff into the town, swaggered about in the presence of the prisoners adorned with Colonel Hore's sword, and his watch and chain. His desire to get rid of as many of the British as possible was shown by his suggestion that they should stand on the verandah as a mark for their own men. Through the long hours the prisoners were cabined and confined in a very limited space, listening to the progress of the battle which still raged outside, and hearing the hail of bullets, hostile and friendly, that spluttered and splintered around the fort. It was a dreadful day of suspense and agony. Food was handed in, but water, owing to the tanks having been perforated by bullets, was scarce, and the sufferings of the wounded, both Britons and Boers, were horrible. Bravely Mr. Dunlop Smith and his assistants responded to the call of Eloff to assist the wounded Boers, and nobly they risked their lives over

## The Transvaal War

and over again, running the gantlet of the British fire in the service of their fellow-creatures.

Meanwhile Baden-Powell's braves had surrounded the fort, and managed to make a vigorous stand against further encroachment of the enemy, while skirmishing of a more or less desperate kind was taking place in the direction of the stadt, round the kraal, and a kopje in its vicinity.

The capture of the kraal and surroundings by Major Godley, Captain Marsh, and Captain Fitzclarence was ingeniously accomplished.



GENERAL BADEN-POWELL, LORD EDWARD CECIL, AND OTHER OFFICERS, AT THE ENTRANCE TO THEIR "DUG-OUT." (Photo by D. Taylor, Mafeking.)

They had not taken lessons in Boer warfare for six months for nothing, consequently, instead of making themselves targets for the foe, they crept towards the walls, bored loopholes with their bayonets, and poured their fire on the invaders. These fought pluckily, but presently came the artillery, and directly the order was given to commence fire the enemy thought it high time to surrender. Then came the question of the fort, where Colonel Hore was still the prisoner of Eloff. Brisk and accurate firing took place, and so hot was the attack that many of the British were wounded by their own people.

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## Mafeking

The victorious Eloff and his party, cut off from his supports and devoid of the assistance reckoned on from Snyman, now found his position as conqueror highly unenviable. Night was coming on, and many of his party struggled to slink out and desert him, but he fired on them and left their dead bodies to add to the confusion. Finally, as there was no help from without, Eloff—surrounded by Colonel Baden-Powell's troops—did the only thing that could be done in the circumstances—he surrendered to his own prisoner, Colonel Hore. Thereupon, he, and others of his gang, numbering 110, including Baron de Bremont, Captain von Weissmann, and several field-cornets, were deprived of their arms and marched into the town, to be accommodated in the Masonic Hall and in the jail. Their appearance was greeted with courteous silence and a certain admiration for the daring of the attack, but the exuberance of the Kaffirs was uncheckable, and they hooted lustily. They had suffered much at the hands of their tormentors, and in this, their hour of triumph, they would not be denied. Of the Boers, 110 were prisoners, 10 were killed, and 19 wounded. It was supposed that other corpses may have been dragged away and disposed of by the natives, who thus got possession of rifles, which weapons had been refused them by the British.

The British casualties were:—

*Killed.*—Lieutenant Phillips, Trooper Maltuschek, Trooper Duberley.  
*Wounded.*—Captain Singleton, Lieutenant G. Bridges, Sergeant Hoskings, Regimental Sergeant-Major S. Malley—all of the Protectorate Regiment; Hazelrigg, Cape Police; Smidt, Town Guard.

Sergeant-Major Heale, in charge of the Dutch prisoners, an esteemed member of the garrison, was killed by a shell. Of Trooper Maltuschek, a few words written by Major Baillie deserve to be quoted, as showing the manner of man and Briton he was. It appears that the gallant fellow absolutely declined to surrender, and fought till he was killed. "It wasn't a case of dashing in and dashing out and having your fun and a fight; it was a case of resolution to die sooner than throw down your arms; the wisdom may be questionable, the heroism undoubted. He wasn't taking any surrender. As far as I am concerned, I have seen the British assert their superiority over foreigners before now, but this man, in my opinion, though I did not see him die, was the bravest man who fought on either side that day. It is a good thing to be an Englishman. These foreigners start too quick and finish quicker. They are good men, but we are better, and have proved so for several hundred years. I had always wanted to see the Englishman fight in a tight hole, and I know what he is worth now. He can outstay the other chap." In these

## The Transvaal War

last words is the whole summing up of the story of battle. In Mafeking, particularly on this terrific day, the British men—and women—had “outstayed the other chap.”

The reason that the loss after so many hours' fighting was comparatively insignificant, was owing to the fact that the garrison was so splendidly handled, and that every soul, ladies included, took a plucky share in the work. Lady Sarah Wilson, Mrs. Buchan, Miss Crawford, and Miss Hill, the matron of the hospital, all distinguished themselves by their plucky actions; and Mrs. Winter and Mrs. Bradley were indefatigable in ministering to the wants of the men. Even the most peaceful beings became bellicose in the common cause, and Reuter's correspondent gave an amusing account of how Mr. Whales, the editor of the *Mafeking Mail*, who was exceedingly plucky but quite unacquainted with military matters, comported himself in the dire emergency. When the railway workshops were manned Mr. Whales got a gun to help; but every time he discharged it, it hit him on the nose, with the result that when all was over, he returned to the bosom of his family covered with his own blood!

Of course this was merely a passing jocosity, for the same chronicler declared that “the most interesting phase of the fight was the manner in which every one in the town showed himself ready to take his share in its defence. The seven months' siege had left very few cowards. All sorts of men who have staff billets and do not generally man the forts seized rifles and hurried to the railway line, the jail, and the workshops, resolved to die in the last ditch, which was the railway line, within three hundred yards of the market-square, the enemy being only five hundred yards below the line.” He further said, “It is customary in London rather to look down on town guards, Volunteers, and citizen soldiers, but it was by these that the town was held and Commandant Eloff was beaten.”

Strange tales were told in that eventful day of the kind treatment meted out to the Boers. They were given clean towels and soap (the latter was at first mistaken for an eatable), and tended like brothers, while all the past aggravations endured at their hands were forgotten or at least ignored. The prisoners, wounded or sound, were greeted almost affectionately by the town. Such drink as there was was shared, and for the time being, amid the general jubilation, at the close of the melodramatic episodes of the day it was difficult to decide which were the happier, friend or foe. Thus generously wrote Mr. Angus Hamilton of the enemy: “We who had been prisoners and were now free rejoiced in the liberty which was restored to us, yet it was difficult to restrain oneself from feeling compassionately upon the great misfortunes which had attended the extraordinary dash and gallantry of the men who were now our

## With Colonel Mahon's Force

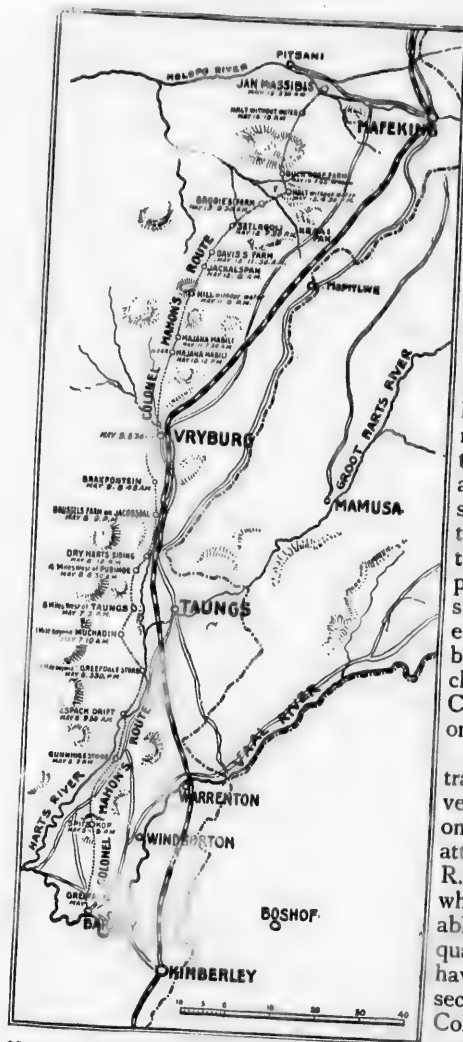
prisoners. They had done their best. They had proved to us that they were indeed capable, and that we should have kept a sharper look-out, while it was indeed deplorable to think that it was the treachery of their own general in abandoning them to their fate, that had been mainly instrumental in procuring them their present predicament."

Sergeant Stuart's account of his experiences was curious. On the morning that Eloff entered, he heard shooting at the east end of the town, and sprang out of bed, "shoved" on a coat, and seized his rifle. When he got out he saw flames at the west end, and ran across the open towards the fort. When he came nearer he saw 400 Boers looking over a wall. They cried out, 'Up hands! surrender.' He was within forty yards, so he turned and bolted. They fired but did not touch him, and he reached the fort. He surrendered soon after, with Colonel Hore and twenty-four others. They were put into a little hut, and kept there all day, firing going on all round. At 6 P.M. Eloff came into the room—about six feet square—and leant against the door, and said, 'Where is Colonel Hore?' 'There he is.' 'I surrender,' said Eloff, 'if you will spare our lives and stop the firing.' The prisoners then sprang up and took their rifles from them, making them their prisoners." Another authority declared that when Eloff was taken before Colonel Baden-Powell, that officer with his customary ease received him affably, and merely said, "Come and have dinner; I am just about to have mine!" Certain it is that Commandant Eloff, Captain von Weissmann, and Captain Bremont were entertained at headquarters.

### WITH COLONEL MAHON'S FORCE

There were whispers in Bloemfontein, there were whispers in Kimberley, there were whispers in Natal. Secretly a scheme, originated by Sir Archibald Hunter (commanding Tenth Division), for the relief of Mafeking was being organised, and the action was to be started so that the movements of the flying column formed for the purpose should synchronise with Lord Roberts's great advance on Pretoria. The Imperial Light Horse (Colonel Edwards) whose laurels had grown green in the harsh nursery of Ladysmith, were brought over from Natal; the Diamond Fields Horse, and the Kimberley Light Horse (Colonel King), who had developed into veterans to the tune of the Kamferdam big gun, were marked down for the dashing enterprise. Some picked men—twenty-five from each of the four battalions of Barton's Fusilier Brigade, under Captain Carr (7th Royals)—were also included among the "braves" who were to form part of Mahon's flying column, and M Battery R.H.A., under Major Jackson.

## The Transvaal War



MAP AND ITINERARY OF COLONEL MAHON'S DASH TO  
MAFEKING.

The object of the flying column was to fly, but at the same time it behoved the expedition to be discreet in its rush, for any advance that could not provide convoy, stores, and medical comfort for the relief would have ended in a showy demonstration which would have been more embarrassing to the besieged than satisfactory. It was necessary to go well laden, and thus keep together the body and soul of Mafeking, and the party of rescuers were immovable till General Hunter, slower and surer in his progress, should have advanced along the railway and repaired the line. It was also imperative to avoid, if possible, any collision with enemy till Mafeking should be neared, and there was a chance of co-operation by Colonel Plumer's and Colonel Baden-Powell's men.

The organisation of the transport was therefore a very serious undertaking, one which engaged all the attention of Major Money, R.A., for over a week, and which involved indescribable labour. Major Money's qualifications as an organiser have been described as second only to those of Colonel Ward, the "Universal Provider" of Ladysmith. Assisting also was Captain Cobbe (Bengal



## With Colonel Mahon's Force

Lancers), who had been laboriously engaged in transport work both in Naauwpoort and Kimberley.

Efforts to maintain secrecy regarding the movement of the force were many, and all connected with the programme were vowed to silence regarding the objective of the march; yet, for all that, the Boers knew when it had started, indeed they declared that a week before the event, the Mafeking besiegers had heard of the project, and were firmly convinced of their ability to cut off the party at Roodoo's Rand, or failing that, to smash it up at a point nearer its destination.

The Imperial Horse quietly encamped at Dronfield in order to excite as little suspicion as possible, then followed M Battery R.H.A., under Major Jackson, and two "pom-poms" under Captain Robinson. Meanwhile some of the Imperial Yeomanry and Kimberley Volunteers sprayed out over the region of Barkly West and Spitzkop, in order to clear the way for the advancing column. At Dronfield also the transport work was carried on, fifty-five waggons being loaded by Major Weil and Sir John Willoughby, both zealous officers, who were full of keenness in the undertaking; while the De Beers community, whose ardour in Imperial matters was proved, continued to throw themselves heart and soul into the great scheme. Twenty waggons contained stores; five, medical comforts; and the rest were loaded with the wherewithal to feed 1100 men and 1200 horses.

At Barkley West was Colonel Mahon, with Colonel Rhodes as intelligence officer. Major Baden-Powell, Scots Guards, the brother of the hero of Mafeking; Captain Bell-Smythe, the brigade major; Prince Alexander of Teck, Sir John Willoughby, Major Maurice Gifford—the one-armed soldier of Matabele fame—were also among the select number, whose good fortune it was to engage in the exciting enterprise.

The column slowly moved out on a nine miles' march to Greefputs, which was, so to speak, the official starting-point—a grand force composed of some of the smartest men of the colony and in the pink of condition!

From the latter place to Spitzkop, a distance of nineteen miles, the column moved on the morning of the 5th of May. About mid-day the troops had intended to advance, but a rumour of Boers in the distance arrested their progress. On the east, ten miles off, could be heard the knocking of General Hunter's guns and some Boerish retorts, and somewhere, in kopjes in the vicinity, were rebels or Dutchmen—at least so it was said, but after a brisk search the road was reported clear, and the march proceeded, through the blistering sunshine, over the scorching western plains to a place called Warwick's Store, and from thence, after a halt for refresh-

## The Transvaal War

ment, on to Gunning Store, a total distance of thirty-five miles. As may be imagined the cool of the moon-blue night was refreshing to the toasted wanderers, and still more refreshing was the capture of two waggon-loads of rebels and their Mausers. Time was not wasted for much slumber or much breakfasting, and by 6 A.M. on the 6th the column was proceeding on its way towards Espach Drift on the left bank of the Harts River. The nine miles' journey was accomplished by 9.30, where the column outspanned till 2.30. At that hour they started to complete their twenty miles in the sunshine, which landed them at Banks Drift—a deep drift where watering the horses was no easy matter. In this locality, called Greefdale Store, wood was scarce, but still the troops were within stone's throw of food, and were able to supplement the scanty rations which had been cut down to the smallest possible figure. The daily allowance was not sumptuous. A great deal of valour and cheeriness had to be sustained on  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of meat,  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of biscuit, 2 oz. of sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of coffee, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of tea. When fresh meat could be captured a change of diet was seized as a relief, and loot from rebels helped to fill the growing vacuum. In certain localities fowls and bread were purchasable. In others beer made a welcome variety to the daily quantum of grog—a tot of rum or lime juice—but really substantial meals were few and far between.

An unfortunate occurrence blighted the day's proceedings. Major Baden-Powell, who, full of rejoicing, was going to the rescue of his brother, met with a nasty accident. His horse in crossing the deep sand of the veldt bungled, and the Major sustained injuries which made him unconscious for some hours. Happily he recovered with the elasticity of his race, and there was no fear that Colonel Baden-Powell's hope, expressed in December,<sup>1</sup> would fail to be gratified.

From Greefdale, on the 7th, the column marched to Muchadin, moving on the right bank of Harts River. Nothing eventful occurred, and the rest of the twenty miles was traversed by 5 P.M. They were now some miles to west of Taungs. This region was found to be evacuated by the Dutchmen, though remains of their recent occupation were evident. The railway station was taken possession of by Major Mullins and a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse. Telegrams were found giving valuable insight into the Dutch moves, and showing that the Boers were lying in wait near Pudimoe, the place—encrusted with menacing rows of kopjes—that the column was about to approach on the morrow.

Next day the column was on the move earlier than usual. Before dawn all were astir, and the distance from Taungs to Pudimoe, twelve miles, was covered by 8.30 A.M. The Boers were in-

<sup>1</sup>See Vol. III. p. 39.

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LIEUT.-COLONEL BRYAN T. MAHON, D.S.O.

Commander of the Mafeking Relief Force

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## With Colonel Mahon's Force

visible. They were ensconced somewhere, with intent to pounce, it was certain, but Colonel Mahon determined, if possible, to avoid imbroglio till the finish. At 10 the troops were moving on to a place called Dry Harts Siding, which was reached at noon. But there was little rest, for on this day twenty-eight miles were covered, ten miles being marched in the cool of the evening. At 9 P.M. under the blinking stars, they outspanned at a place called Brussels Farm, where food—hot food, ardently desired and eagerly stowed away—was plentiful.

The next morning the force was on its way to Vryburg, doing eight miles before 9 A.M. They took up the thread of their travels at noon, marched another thirteen miles, and found themselves by tea-time at the desired and welcome haven of rest. The stores were at once invaded, and creature comforts were purchased at heavy rates. The British were received with some show of enthusiasm. In the little white town margined with aromatic, emerald-leaved pepper trees banners waved and Union Jacks fluttered, and passers-by came in for a handshake with men of their own kind, who invited them to "pot-luck." Some of a commando that had been lurking in the vicinity of Pudimoe now trickled in and surrendered; other members of the Dutch conspiracy turned informer, while the loyal British subjects, who had declined to rebel to order of the Boers, poured out their experiences. One of them declared that during the Boer reign in the town British ladies who had remained there were not permitted to walk on the causeway, a regulation that in the Transvaal had previously been confined to Kaffirs! In other respects, beyond despoiling the police camp and the former Bechuanaland Residency, the Boers had done little harm.

A leaf from the diary of a member of the Scots Fusiliers describes this halt in a town which was somewhat Janus-faced in its loyalty:—

"9th May.—I awoke much refreshed by my good night's rest. 5.30 A.M.—On the march. The ground being densely shrubby, many halts have to be made to allow the scouts to reconnoitre the front. 10 A.M.—Roodepoort. We are now nine miles from Vryburg. Water and rations are, as usual, scarce. 11 A.M.—'Halloa! what the deuce is this?' A gaily decorated carriage with three pretty maidens! 'Well, I never! what can they want!' Oh, thank you, as they gracefully throw us some loaves of lovely white bread, and with the most charming of smiles welcome us to Vryburg. 'Bravo,' my bonny lassies! had it not been for my uncouth apparel and bristly whiskers, 'a kiss,' I should have vaunted you. 12 noon.—So the Boers have fled from Vryburg! What an infernal pack of cowards, and no mistake! All the better for us; the less opposition the sooner at our journey's end. 2 P.M.—We continue the march. 5 P.M.—Vryburg. An enthusiastic crowd of supposed loyalists greet our arrival with cheers. Somehow their welcome is not at all appreciated. Most of them are Dutch, and, considering the Boers have been amongst them until two days ago, we fail to see what loyalty they could have established for us in so short a time. 7 P.M.—On outpost; an exceedingly cold night."

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But whatever the sentiments of the people, there was decent food and a brief chance of comfortably partaking of it, and there was a sigh when the enjoyable time came to an end, and Vryburg, with its apology for civilisation, its costly meals and inferior cigars, so highly appreciated in those days of sparse comfort, had to be left behind. Farewell drinks—beer, gin and lime-juice, green chartreuse, tea—were disposed of, and then from five till midnight the steady march onwards was pursued. The conditions of the march, if nothing worse, were uncomfortable. No man dared betray his presence with the whiff of a cigar; and after the sun-scorchings of the baking African day, the searching, chill air of the moonlit veldt nipped the bones and filled the frame with aguish apprehensions. So cold were the nights that some declared they had to sleep walking up and down to save themselves from being frozen. Still, through it all, every member of the gallant band remembered the glorious object of his mission, and, when inclined to growl, packed away personal irritations and meditated on the number of hours which would elapse before London would be ringing with the news of the great relief. Every soul of this goodly company was swelling with pride and satisfaction at having the good luck to be among those chosen for the spirited exploit, and it was this pride, this almost heroic afflatus, which served to cast into insignificance the thousand and one inconveniences, trying to constitution and to temper, which were involved in this momentous if fatiguing march. It is true, bullet and shell were as yet only in the near future, but the aggravations of these, as all men agreed, were not to be compared with the sustained fret of marching under unrelenting sunshine, sleeping in violent chills, eating irresponsive biscuit, tackling "bully" without the assistance of a hatchet as a mincer; and enduring through all a parching thirst, a perpetual craving for water, which, when found, bred a loathly suspicion of the imps of enteric and dysentery that might lurk therein. As Mr. Stuart of the *Morning Post* declared: "To go through ten or a dozen of our days uncomplainingly was a higher test of manhood than to fight, howsoever gallantly. To stand to arms an hour before sunrise, possibly to march for hours without a cup of coffee in the empty stomach, possibly to do patrol or picket as soon as the outspan place was selected, to return barely in time for a wad of stringy beef and some chunks of biscuit, to march again across the sand or over lumpy grass, so tired that at every halt they lay at their horses' feet dozing till the unwelcome 'Stand to your horses' was called, to go to bed without fire, without the last sleepy pipe: that was often what Mahon's men called a day."

It is well to emphasise what may be called the greys and drabs and neutral tints that go to the making up of a complete picture

## With Colonel Mahon's Force

of heroism; it is imperative to appreciate the superb nuances which in their very retirement and unostentatious inconspicuousness made the background to now immemorial scenes in our nation's history. There are so many who have contributed their tiny inch of fine neutral tint, their little all of patience and self-abnegation to make up this background—infinitesimal atoms in the great machinery, whose names and histories are enveloped in the vast dust bosom of the veldt, yet who, unknown and unsung, have contributed the "mickle" which has made the "muckle" belonging to the Empire. The ruminations of a soldier, who, rolled up in his overcoat, was struggling to sleep, shows the pathetic side of the brilliant undertaking: "Horses and mules are dropping down from sheer exhaustion, unfit for further service. They are left on the veldt a prey to the hungry vultures. . . . I shudder as I inwardly apply the case to myself, how perhaps in years to come, when of no more use to my country, I am left, like those poor creatures, to the mercy of an ungrateful world, or, worse still, thrown as a pauper into some home of destitution."

On the 11th they were early astir in the dewy air of the morning, moving across open country to Majana Mabili, which was reached at 7.30 A.M., and on from this place after tea, on and on for eleven miles, till the stars began to shimmer, and moon to light the open veldt. The night was spent at a spot known as the "Hill without Water," a name sufficiently inhospitable and repellent.

Nearly the whole of the 12th was spent in marching, with short periods for rest, from Jacobspan to Setlagoli, the latter part of the way over infamous roads, drifts, and stretches of sand, ledged with limestone and other impediments disastrous to cattle and to the tempers of their owners. However, the reception in Setlagoli compensated for many discomforts, for at the hotel, the proprietor of which was a Scotsman, there was fat fare and "a true Scots welcome," which in other words means that the company regaled themselves at the expense of mine host, who refused to accept any equivalent for his hospitality! During the day some sad scenes had occurred, scenes so pathetic that they touched the hearts of the rank and file in the pursuance of their duty. One of them said, "Some Dutch farmers who had been brought in by our scouts as suspects, were followed by their wives and children. Undoubtedly the poor women thought that after examination by the chief officer they would be allowed to return with them. As it was, however, we had some very clever detectives with us, who unfortunately caused them to be handed over to the guard as prisoners. The women in their extreme anguish at seeing their husbands about to be separated from them, rushed in amongst us, flung their arms around their necks, and refused to leave them. The scene that followed was a pitiful one,

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and not until the convoy had gone some distance on its way did their heart-rending cries cease to be heard."

On Sunday the 13th of May the plot began to thicken. Colonel Mahon, as we are aware, had been reserving himself, knowing that the nearer he came to his destination, the more certain was he of repeated tussles with the enemy. Native scouts now informed him the Dutchmen were assembling at Maribogo, hanging round Kraaipan Siding, and lurking in their hundreds in the frowning kopjes that fringed the nek near Koodoo's Rand. Precautions were taken, and all remembered the Mafeking besiegers had bragged of their intention to cut off the party at Koodoo's Rand. The Light Horse, in very extended columns of squadrons, provided the advance and the scouts, and the transport moved in five parallel columns. Nothing as yet was seen of the Boers, and the troops reached a point nine miles off, called Brodie's Farm, in safety. Here they watered their horses, and rested till the early afternoon. Here they were joined by an officer who had ridden from Colonel Plumer's force, which, acting on information received, had by then reached Canea. Three questions were forwarded from Colonel Plumer. First, he wished to know the number of Colonel Mahon's men; second, his guns; third, the amount of his supplies. It became necessary to concoct a reply which should defeat the curiosity of the Boers, and to that end Colonel Mahon and Colonel Rhodes put their astute heads together, with the result that for the number of men they answered, *The Naval and Military Club multiplied by ten* (94 Piccadilly). The number of guns was described as *The number of brothers in the Ward family* (six); and the amount of supplies was represented by *The C.O., 9th Lancers* (Small, Little). It was now decided that both Colonels—the relieving officers—should join hands at Jan Massibi's, Colonel Mahon's plan being to make a detour to the north-west of his route and thus surprise the enemy, who imagined he would come straight by way of Wright's Farm.

Now came a critical moment. The column moved out from Brodie's Farm in the afternoon, and had scarcely started before they became aware that Boers were slinking everywhere, behind trees, in the scrub, in the dried grass of the veldt. They had been so admirably concealed that the Imperial Light Horse scouts had ridden beyond them. Now, however, when they began to blaze away with rifles from the scrub, the scouts turned upon them, caught them in the rear, while in front they were greeted with such warm volleys that they made for their horses, which had been deftly hidden in the bush. Others of their number strove to get a chance of enfilading the convoy, which was promptly diverted from its course to the left, while the guns galloped to the rescue, and took up a position that commanded the open ground to the right,



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and here blazed away, pouring cascades of shrapnel whenever the smoke from the Dutchmen's Mausers gave them a clue to the whereabouts of the hostile weapons, and a chance to put in some execution. Meanwhile, the Boers were firing fast and furious at the gunners, and awaiting reinforcements which were spurring across the far distance. The Imperial Light Horse, dashing as ever, were pouring volleys into the enemy, and sweeping them towards the British 12-pounders, and there was a good half-hour's brisk interchange of aggressions, much of the fighting being done on foot and at fairly close quarters. The pom-poms also rapped out a warning tune, and the smart Light Horse, now riding, now dismounted, hunted the foe across the ochreous grass of the veldt, keeping him perpetually on the run, or "winging" him so that he could run no more. Meanwhile Colonel King, on the right rear with his Kimberley men, assisted in the fight, and finally after much volleying and sniping the Dutchmen took themselves off. But the brilliant skirmish was not without its penalties, for twenty-one men were wounded, while six—including a native driver who had been knocked from his waggon in the course of the fray—were killed. Major Mullins of the Light Horse was seriously injured in the spine, an unlucky incident, following, as it did, on the loss to the gallant regiment of Major Wools Sampson and Major Doveton. Corporal Davis of A Squadron was hit, but managed even afterwards to do considerable damage among the Boers. Mr. Hands, the correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, sustained a compound fracture of the thigh, and Major Baden-Powell narrowly escaped, so narrowly, indeed, that his watch was stopped and a whistle twisted in his pocket by the force of the bullet. Captain Mullins, Kimberley Mounted Corps, was also injured.

After their exhilarating and successful conflict it was decided that the force should bivouac where they were, the country to the north having been scouted and reported free of the enemy. It was said also to be devoid of water. No water could be found, and food was scanty, but the troops after their satisfactory rout of the Boers went to sleep in the moonlight full, if of nothing else, of contentment!

With the passage of every hour precautions became more necessary, for the Boers might now be expected to crop up from any quarter. At 6 A.M. the troops started, the men riding six yards apart from each other, for Buck Reef Farm, a distance of five miles. A drift had to be negotiated, and water from the bed of the River Maretsani was dug up, and, richly yellow though it was, enjoyed. It was necessary to make the most of this refreshing if suspicious draught, for now the march onwards promised to be almost entirely waterless, with the enemy possibly mounting guard over any pools which might present themselves.

## The Transvaal War

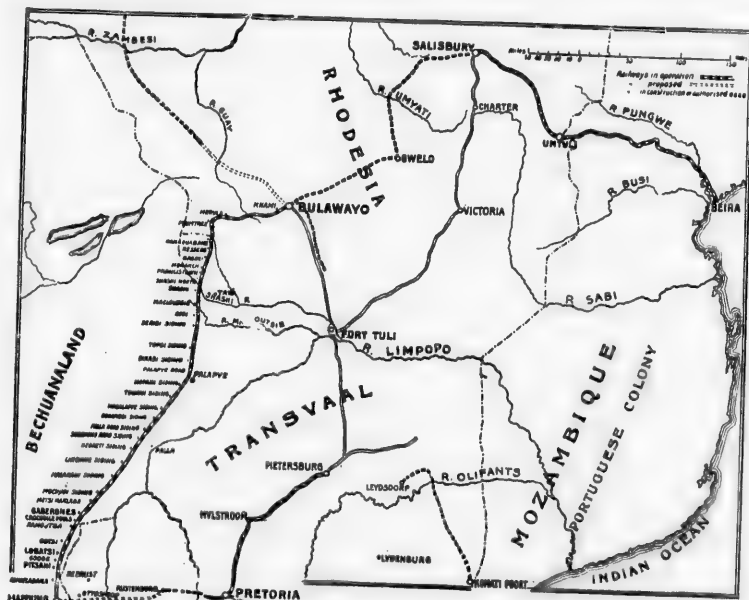
Through the long dull afternoon they trailed upwards over a hill for eight long miles, and then on, for another eight, ploughing the sand and wearily craving for water. Man and beast were united in the common want, the absorbing yearning. Day passed into twilight and dusk broke into moonbeams; then, jaded and travel-sore, they outspanned for a brief rest.

At 1 A.M. on the 15th they were again on the move, and by 3 A.M. were making their way over the plains of sand and tussocky grass towards the one haven of their desire, Jan Massibi's—every nerve and muscle strained to meet Colonel Plumer and his small force to time, to get to the trysting-place with celerity and secrecy which should outwit the Boers, and prevent them driving a wedge between the two relief columns that had endured so much to arrive at a now almost achieved end! So, on and on, half asleep, half awake, famished, dry, aching, dull but not desponding, they went, halting often, napping 'sometimes, mounting again and pursuing their way towards that ever-to-be-desired point in the west where Plumer was thought to be. And sure enough there they found him! The day dawned, the morning brightened, and in the distance, light—a glow of fires—was seen. Between the relievers and the glare was a native stadt, and nearer still a river. Here the scouts in advance came on other scouts, eyed them suspiciously, eagerly, delightedly. They were Plumer's scouts, and the joy of the encounter amply compensated for the pains of all who had covered during the past two days twenty-eight miserable miles in miserable condition. All the weariness of the night was forgotten, all the discomforts set aside. The horses galloped to the Molopo brink like wild creatures, drinking furiously; and the men, too, milder in their transport, greeted the streak of glittering stream with unfeigned rejoicing.

It must here be noted that while the column was moving from Buck Reef Farm to Jan Massibi's, Colonel Plumer's force was approaching the same point from the north, and beautifully, like the grooves of a Chinese puzzle, the two relief parties met together about 5 A.M. Colonel Plumer was accompanied by his regiment of Rhodesians, some 350 of them, who for five months, under exceptional difficulties of climate and conditions, had been untiring in their efforts to hold back the enemy in their attempt to invade Rhodesia *via* Tuli, and in their determination to retain the Bulawayo Railway for over 200 miles south of the Rhodesian border in British hands. This diminutive force, though it had achieved so much, had been powerless for want of guns to achieve still more. Colonel Plumer, in addition to Colonel Spreckley and others who had been fighting with him, was accompanied now, by a battery of Canadian Artillery, under Major Hudon (an officer

## With Colonel Mahon's Force

whose delicate French accent gave a refining touch to the British tongue), and some 200 Queenslanders. How Colonel Plumer came into possession of the valuable addition to his troops must be described. It may be remembered that a force called the Rhodesian Field Force, numbering some 5000 men and 7000 horses, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Carrington, was originated to provide against the contingency of an attack on Rhodesia from the south, and to avert any plan on the part of the Boers to



MAP SHOWING THE ROUTE FOR THE RELIEF OF MAFEKING FROM THE NORTH.

migrate or escape to the north. It was composed mainly of Colonial troops, and placed in charge of a general whose unequalled experience of the country through which he was travelling and fighting made him unusually valuable. Besides Colonials were some 1100 Yeomanry, a company of the Lancashire, Belfast and Dublin's, and Lord Dunraven's Sharpshooters.

While Sir Frederick Carrington was at Capetown he, knowing that Colonel Plumer's force was weak in artillery, devised a scheme

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for helping him. He made an arrangement with Mr. Zeederberg—the well-known Rhodesian coach-owner and a first-rate type of the Colonial Dutchman—by which the guns before named and escort were to be conveyed by mail coaches to the Rhodesian column. Mr. Zeederberg accompanied the General to Beira, and there telegraphed to Rhodesia suspending the ordinary mail service (conveying passengers and mails from Salisbury and Bulawayo), and diverting the mules to the Marandellas-Bulawayo Road. That done, no sooner had the troops steamed from Beira to Marandellas than the men were transferred to the stage-coaches and the mules were hitched to the guns, and thus the force was got to Bulawayo twenty days earlier than they would have done if moved in the ordinary manner.

The active way in which the Colonials threw themselves into the movement deserves consideration. On the 13th of April C Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery, under Major Hudon, were ordered to proceed *via* the Cape to Beira, there to join General Sir Frederick Carrington's force. They reached their destination on the 22nd, and entrained for Marandellas, where the General had established his base camp. After a long and trying journey in open trucks, scorched by sun, burnt by sparks from the engine, agued by night chills, and jolted on one of what is called the worst railways in the world, they reached their destination on the 26th. Colonel Plumer was known to be helpless without artillery, and therefore no time was to be lost, as every haste was necessary to equip that officer for the approaching operations.

Accordingly the "Salisbury to Bulawayo" resources were utilised as has been described, and two guns left Marandellas on the 30th of April, followed on May the 1st and 2nd by others, which were carried a distance of over 300 miles to Bulawayo by the 6th. From Bulawayo they were forwarded to Ootsi, where the rail was found to be destroyed, and consequently the remaining sixty miles to Safeteli were accomplished by a forced march. Colonel Plumer was joined by the Colonials on the 14th, and at once proceeded to meet Colonel Mahon at Jan Massibi's. A more ingenious synchronal achievement can scarcely be imagined.

The meeting of Colonel Mahon and Colonel Plumer was most cordial, and many old chums and acquaintances forgathered and cheerily exchanged reminiscences over their morning coffee. Here, in this remote corner of South Africa, near the brown thatched cottages of Jan Massibi's staadt, was gathered around in the sunlight a stalwart company of picked men whose equal could scarcely be discovered in any part of the world. Men of breeding and distinction; men in the prime of life, brawny and tough and smart; men intellectual, courageous to daredevilry, and withal full of resource. Here, on the Kimberley side, were warriors old and tried—Colonel

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LIEUT.-COLONEL PLUMER

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## With Colonel Mahon's Force

King, who had been General Hunter's aide-de-camp in Ladysmith; Colonel Peakman, the hero of many Kimberley fights; Major Karri Davies and dashing Colonel Edwards; popular Colonel Rhodes the pioneer; and the ever-jovial Dr. Davies of the Light Horse. There were Prince Alexander of Teck, a youthful veteran by now; Major the Hon. Maurice Gifford, a soldier to the finger-nails; Captain Bell-Smythe, the energetic brigade-major; and many more, all chivalrous and hardy men of mark.

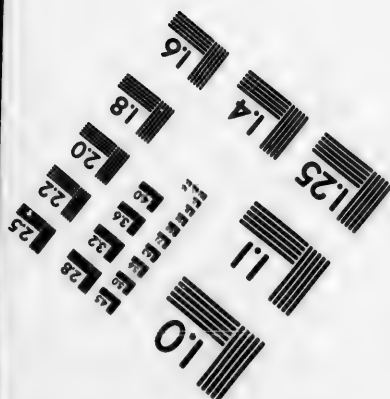
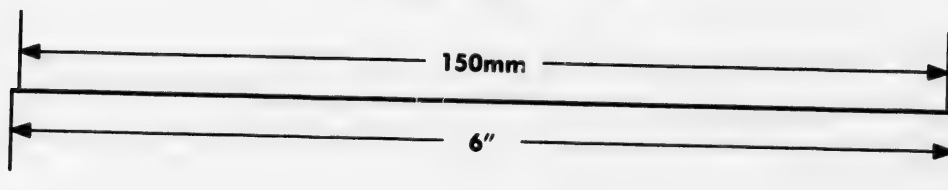
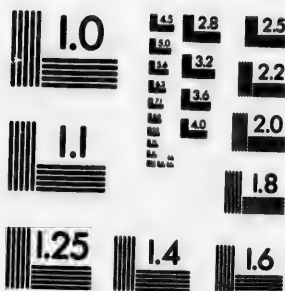
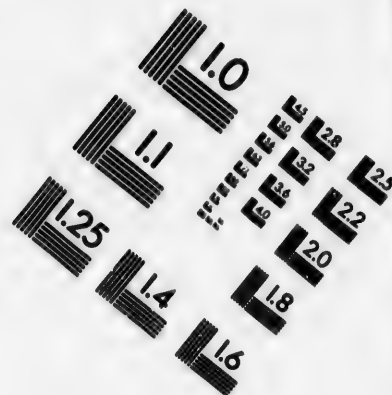
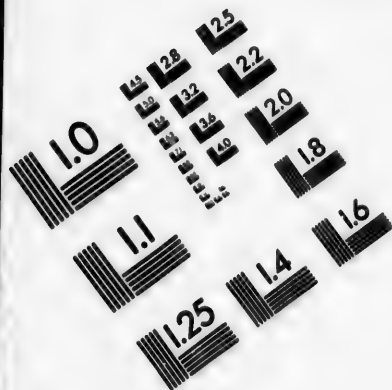
On the Rhodesians there were other grand specimens of British manhood. There was first the colonel—bronzed, dark-eyed, meditative—a man who without display had skirmished his way along the border-side from Tuli downwards, keeping the Boers in eternal suspense and so perpetually employed that they were unable to gain breathing time to concentrate their energies on Mafeking. Next came Colonel White, one of the bulwarks of Rhodesia; an adventurous spirit of the first order, an unerring shot, and, like most of his comrades, a chip of the old British block that furnished the material of the Light Brigade. There were Colonel Spreckley, a seasoned and notable fighter, alas! engaging in almost his last exploit, and Colonel Bodle of the British South Africa Police, a tower of strength, with vast experience of the western frontier of the Transvaal, and the necessary "slimness"—cultivated in a practical school—without which the handling of live eels like the Boers was impossible. There were Major Bird, another gallant and indefatigable officer; Lieutenant Harland, bright, blue-eyed, and buoyant, a typical British soldier; and Lieutenant Smitheman, valiant as Mettus Curtius and acute as a weazel—the first officer who had been successful in worming himself into Mafeking and out again!

Colonel Mahon's force had been travelling at the rate of twenty-two miles a day over sandy tracks and waterless deserts, and skirmishing by the way. They were, by now, very sun-baked and weary, but jovial beyond measure. In the evening camp-fires were lighted and goodly fare roasted, the flesh of captured oxen coming in handy to appease the appetite of the voracious travellers. It was a grand night of rest and plenty and cheeriness at the thought of work accomplished, and of plans which promised to end in triumph over the enemy. A spirit of *camaraderie* prevailed. All alike were tingling with the glow of ambition which hatches heroes. It was an unique company—an inter-British-national throng, and vastly interesting in its heterogeneous characteristics. The Bushmen were perhaps the most curious and refreshing type of the Imperial Brotherhood. Every one with an appreciation for the genuine was swift to pronounce them delightful fellows, sound in wind and limb, full of go, spirited and keen for work of any kind that came to hand. In addition to this they were friendly and hospitable,





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## The Transvaal War

would share their last chunk of "bully" with any one who was suffering from a vacuum, and had the "nous" to forage for themselves and find their way about in the veldt in a manner that excited as much admiration as surprise. They could ride too. They sat a buckjumper as a child sits a swing, and seemed to be horsemasters as it were by instinct. Full to overflowing with loyalty, they talked of home and Queen as though they had been born on the steps of Buckingham Palace. They were democratic withal. Their loyalty was to the supe : the estimable, and the Queen to them was the sample of the ideal womanhood, holding them enslaved by the power that is the firmest of all powers—the hair-line of respect.

To return to our "moutons" and to the sheep-pen in the heart of the veldt. At last dawned the memorable 16th—the ever-to-be-remembered morning when Mafeking, like a little white clothes-drying yard, came to be seen in the distance. All along the north bank of the Molopo for nine miles had marched the two columns, Colonel Plumer's Brigade leading, followed by Colonel Edwards and the Second Brigade, till at last, in the far grey plain, the little hamlet that had been the subject of so much persecution and so much British anxiety, came in sight.

Then all were prepared for the worst or for the best. They lunched frugally, cooled themselves with draughts from the clear river, and then . . . then the enemy made his last, his expiring effort. He began to blaze with his rifles on the extreme left, and continued so to blaze till volley followed volley. Off went the Light Horse buoyant and brisk towards the north, followed by Colonel King and his redoubtable "Kimburlians," who started to frustrate any attempt at a rear attack. But this attempt not being made he joined forces with the Light Horse, with whom were M Battery and the pom-poms.

Meanwhile the Boers in front began to ply their guns "for all they were worth," shifting their pieces so as to enfilade the right of the British, thinking on that flank to make a more favourable impression. But on both fronts some Dutchmen were collected, and those on the left were engaged by the Light Horse and a section of M Battery, while on the right Colonel Plumer's Maxim-Nordenfeldt with the Battery of the Canadians did excellent execution. Two squadrons of Rhodesians advanced from the south across the river, to watch Boer reinforcements which hovered in the distance.

The Boers now made an effort to attack the convoy, which had been diverted to the left ; but here the Dutchmen had the astute Colonel Peakman to deal with. This officer promptly set his guns to work, and pounded them with such precision and warmth that they were glad enough to fall back on their main body. Then the

## With Colonel Mahon's Force

Canadians assailed them, and later Captain Montmorency with his Maxim-Nordenfeldt silenced the big Boer gun. So effective was the action of the artillery that about 3 P.M. the Boers were beginning to show signs of removal. Meanwhile the Light Horse and the Kimberley troops were pushing boldly on, and by four o'clock the besiegers were on the run, their scurrying silhouettes dotting for a moment or two the skyline and then vanishing into space!

On the right fighting still lingered on, the enemy trying hard to hold their ground, the Canadians trying equally hard to dislodge them from a position before Mafeking known as the White House. There was some tough work here, and presently M Battery from 3600 yards north of the house came to the assistance of the Canadians. Finally the Fusiliers and the Queensland with fixed bayonets, and a rush and roar, assailed the enemy's last position, and the door to Mafeking was opened! Off scrambled the remnant of the Boer hordes, leaving behind them ammunition and many other things grateful to the hearts of the conquerors.

For the first time the enemy found themselves outnatched in the way of guns as in the way of wits. Gloating, they had been circling round Mafeking, waiting with confidence for an exhausted force. They found instead a force that had marched warily, and reserved itself, and came with full rush upon them; a force that had been concentrating its energies to give them as much fighting as they cared for. The whole route was now purged of Boers, and when at dusk the column outspanned it was but for a brief hour or two. Without warning, Colonel Mahon inspanned again, determining to take advantage of the moonlight and the clear road; in a very short time he was wending his way towards the great destination. At four o'clock on the morning of the 17th his mission was accomplished!

The losses were many, for the fighting, during the short time it lasted, was fierce and sustained; and the Boer force numbered some 2000, while the British columns amounted to about 1500. There were over sixty killed and wounded:—

Lieutenant Edwin Harland, Hampshire Regiment—commanding C Squadron Rhodesian Regiment, was killed. The following were wounded: 2nd Royal West Surrey Regiment—Major W. D. Bird, severe. British South Africa Police—Lieutenant Richard Sherman Godley, slight. Rhodesian Regiment—Lieutenant John Alexander Forbes, slight. Royal Horse Artillery—Lieutenant N. M. Gray, severe. Kimberley Mounted Corps—Captain C. P. Fisher, slight. Imperial Light Horse—Lieutenant Hew Campbell Ross, slight.

Gallant young Harland was generally regretted. He had taken the place of Captain Maclaren when that officer was wounded in the attempt to rescue Mafeking on the 31st, and had displayed such first-rate talents, both as soldier and scout, that he had earned for himself the title of "Baden-Powell the Second."

## The Transvaal War

The following table describes the forces engaged in the Relief:—

MAFEKING.—Protectorate Regiment (800), Cape Mounted Police, British South Africa Company's Mounted Police, Bechuanaland Rifles—1500 men. COLONEL PLUMER'S FORCE.—Rhodesia Regiment, Southern Rhodesia Volunteers, Bechuanaland Border Police, A Detachment of Canadian Artillery. COLONEL MAHON'S FLYING COLUMN.—100 men from Barton's Frontier Brigade, 200 Queenslanders (Bushmen). KIMBERLEY MOUNTED CORPS.—Diamond Fields Horse, Kimberley Light Horse, Cape Police, Imperial Light Horse, Diamond Fields Artillery, M Battery Royal Horse Artillery—1200 men.

### ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER—THE INVASION OF THE TRANSVAAL *VIA* CHRISTIANA.

At the same time, on the Western Frontier, affairs were progressing in accord with Lord Roberts's strategical programme. Sir Charles Warren had arrived to take up his new post as military governor of Griqualand West, and General Hunter was engaged in a species of overture to cover the advance of the Flying Column which had started on the 5th. Without opposition he effected the passage of the Vaal River at Windsorton. There was great satisfaction to feel that British shells were at last exploding in Transvaal territory, and that the voice of the new gun, "Bobs," was spreading devastation far and wide. Three Boer laagers were dispersed, and on the 4th of May the new weapon caused considerable commotion within the Republican border. Ambulances were seen performing their melancholy duty for some time after the morning shelling had ceased. On the 5th Barton's Brigade encountered 2000 and more of the enemy some two miles north of Rooidam. The Dutchmen, in a hilly and jagged position extending over four miles, but from their beloved kopjes they were routed time after time, and with considerable loss, by the magnificent dash of the troops, who carried one ridge after another with splendid energy and daring. The Yeomanry under Colonel Meyrick especially distinguished themselves, their courage and coolness under fire being remarkable. They not only engaged the enemy at very close quarters, but chased them for miles. General Hunter, having settled the Dutchmen, after a contest of some eight hours' duration, joined hands with the British force under General Paget at Warrenton.

Fourteen Streams was now occupied without opposition, the enemy having found the attentions of the artillery in the direction of the left bank of the Vaal far too pressing for his liking. At sight of the approach of the 6th and half the 5th Brigades of infantry the Boers scampered, leaving behind them in the trenches saddles, ammunition, and wardrobes. A British camp was formed at Fourteen Streams—C Company of the Munster Fusiliers, under

## On the Western Frontier

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Lieutenant Caning, having been the first to cross the river during the night. These were followed at dawn by the rest of the troops. The river was low, and the Engineers set to work to construct a pontoon bridge for heavy traffic, and to mend the old railway bridge and make it fit for immediate use.

The following casualties took place during the advance: Captain Lovett, 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, died from wounds, and Captain MacMahon, 2nd Royal Fusiliers, was wounded.

The ten days' march to Vryburg, which was reached on the 24th of May, was comparatively uneventful, but the Yeomanry did excellent work, as the following report of a Glasgow yeoman serves to show:—"We were most of the time on half-rations, and every morning were up before 2 A.M. . . . The first day we left the camp at Warrenton we crossed the Vaal River, where the railway bridge was blown up. They have now got a temporary one made, which they completed two days after we left. . . . On the other side we joined the Union Brigade; Colonel Hart (Barton), I think, is commander of it. We had two batteries of artillery with us, and some other brigade joined us next day, and we were supposed to be about 12,000 strong under General Sir A. Hunter. They do not tell you whether you are going to fight or on a day's march, the regulars say; but we all expected one the day after we left, as we were advised to make any personal arrangements we had to make. Next day we moved off about 6.30. Nineteenth and 20th Companies were the scouts, and 17th and 18th the support. It is rather exciting the first day you are out scouting, with ninety cartridges in your bandolier and ten in your magazine, expecting to come in contact with the Boers every minute. Some of their patrols were seen two days before we left. On Wednesday morning we came in sight of Christiana, which we took in great style. We galloped half round it at half a mile distance in extended order, the Major and Captain C— galloping up to houses, putting the butts of their rifles through the windows, and looking to see if the houses were occupied. There were very few people there; 2000 Boers had left the day before. However, we came across two or three, who were disarmed, and all the arms that were got in the town were broken up. We commandeered a lot of cattle, sheep, and horses, left a company of infantry in charge of the town, left again that night, and did about other six miles' march towards Toungs. We saw about a hundred Boers two days later, but they did not let us get near them. We are the only cavalry attached to the column, so that we have to do all the scouting, front and rear guards. It is quite a sight to see a column on the march. First scouts are out in front advancing in line, about a hundred yards apart, then the supports, next a skirmishing line of infantry, then two or three companies of them. After

## The Transvaal War

this long lines of transports, the artillery, droves of cattle and sheep, then more infantry, and behind the rearguard. I have only washed once since I left Warrenton, now twelve days ago, and then I had no soap, and had to dry my face with my handkerchief. We had to leave all our stuff behind us so as to march as light as possible. These last two days we have been getting bread, as they have now got the railway put right up this length. We were only getting two hard biscuits per day, coffee in the morning and tea at night, pretty often without any sugar, and sometimes we couldn't manage to get sticks to make a fire. The beer is 4s. per bottle. The Boers have commandeered everything nearly, and the folks here were glad to see us. The enemy cleared out of here fourteen days ago."

Space does not admit of a detailed account of this excellent movement, which was originated in support of the Mafeking Relief Column, and had for a double object the protection of Mahon's force and the invasion of the Transvaal from the west.

To appreciate the turn of wheel within wheel of Lord Roberts's strategic machinery it is necessary to give a glance at the map of the Transvaal. It will then be seen that synchronously with the occupation of Christiana by General Sir Archibald Hunter on the 16th and the Relief of Mafeking by Colonels Mahon and Plumer, we find Lord Methuen moving towards Hoopstad, Lord Roberts holding Kroonstad, General Ian Hamilton pushing up towards Lindley and Heilbron, and farther east Generals Clery and Donald advancing towards Ingogo and Laing's Nek respectively!

### THE RELIEF.

To return to Mafeking. On the day that Colonel Mahon and Colonel Plumer joined hands near Jan Massibi's thatched village, news leaked in that the long-talked-of relief was verily at hand. They had heard this kind of thing before, and their despair lest the Boers should attack the town to obtain the release of Eloff was scarcely allayed. However, on the 16th, dust was espied in the distance, and there was a rush to the roofs of the houses to ascertain whether that dust was hostile or friendly. It was afterwards discovered that it was the sign of the retiring enemy, and eventually towards dusk it was announced that the Relief Column was really in sight. The longing eyes of Mafeking looked out, and for the first time saw their persecutors in full retreat, saw them begin to run, and then, later, scudding for their lives, while their gratified ears, so tuned to the sound of the vicious artillery of the foe, now heard the cheery notes of the Canadian artillery, the pom-poms, and other pieces, clearing the barricades that for so long had shut out the free air of

## The Relief

cattle and sheep, have only washed and then I had relief. We had to do the best possible. These Boers have now got the getting two hard fight, pretty often get to get sticks and Boers have come over glad to see go."

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el Mahon and atched village, verily at hand. ir despair lest e of Eloff was espied in the es to ascertain afterwards dis- and eventually n was really in d for the first gin to run, and ears, so tuned ard the cheery other pieces, the free air of

day. In the late afternoon Major Karri Davies, who after the routing of the Federals had never drawn rein till he reached Mafeking, accompanied by some eight of the Imperial Light Horse, the Light Horse that had been first in Ladysmith, marched into the town. Surprise was intense! Then surprise thawed into warmth, and then warmth grew to fever-heat. Rapture eventually reached boiling-point, and the nine men, gaunt, worn, haggard with fatigue, were deafened with cheers, and had not strength enough to do the handshaking.

Meanwhile, as we know, Colonel Mahon had outspanned. He did this only to inspan again, and proceed by moonlight to the town. He had followed the rule of South African strategy,—said he was going to do one thing and did the other,—thus outwitting the Boers, who having retired wearily, were gathering themselves up to lunge at him, and intercept his entry so soon as the dawn should break. But by four in the morning of the 17th, while the chill dramatic moonbeams were yet bathing the scene with strange mystery, Colonel Mahon and his merry men—they were merrier than merry at the prospect of their welcome—led by Major Baden-Powell, the brother of the hero of the defence, approached the town. The news of the arrival spread like wildfire. Immediately all was bustle, and bliss, and gratulation. Men, women, and children beamed. Some wept; some danced. The natives indulged in wild sounds, and showed rows of dazzling teeth. Exuberance took amazing forms; stranger wrung the hand of stranger, friends grasped and re-grasped: if they had been foreigners they would have embraced! The large hearts of the heroes within and the large hearts of the heroes from without were throbbing in unison, bursting with satisfaction in the accomplishment of great work in the cause of their country and of their fellow-men. The ragged, battered, grimy, magnificent throng was almost at a loss to express itself. Words lagged, and even those forthcoming were blurred by a foggy haze in the throat, while a strange mistiness crept over eyes that for seven months had been bright with the fire of determination. But withal, there was no emasculating abandonment to rapture of the hour. There was no unbuckling of armour. At nine the serious work of war began again. The united forces went out on a reconnaissance in the direction of MacMullin's farm, where the chief Dutch laager was fixed, and then all the artillery, even to the grandfatherly "Lord Nelson," performed in concert in honour of the great occasion. Cascades of shrapnel and little white balls of smoke danced and played over the laager, and bombs burst with violent detonations, and then, like magic, wreaths of dust began to rise and increase, and cloud the distance. It was the Dutchmen scampering for dear life across the veldt, their waggons and guns—all save one—rumbling into space.



## The Transvaal War

This one was abandoned in the hurried flight, the Boers having taken the precaution to destroy the breech, but it was nevertheless captured as a precious souvenir of times more pleasant in reminiscence than in being. The forts were visited in turn, and at Game-Tree—that dreadful thorn in the side of the garrison—the Union Jack went up to a chorus of cheers. Finally, the place was devoured by fire, to the satisfaction of those who had so long regarded it with apprehension and hate. At MacMullin's farm were found the Boer wounded, deserted of their kind, who had scuttled with such alacrity that even their still smoking breakfasts had been foregone. Lieutenant Currie and his smart Cape Boys, and Major Baillie (4th Hussars), came on one or two stragglers in the Boer laager, who wisely surrendered. Snyman's official correspondence was discovered, and from this much valuable information was gleaned. From one bundle of papers the garrison learned the pleasing intelligence that Kroonstadt had fallen; from another, that Kruger was not best pleased with the old Commandant—indeed, the President without palaver had inquired by telegram whether his failure of the previous Saturday had been due to drink! The rescue of Captain Maclaren (13th Hussars) from the clutches of the enemy caused great satisfaction, and he was borne off in triumph to the hospital, where he was comfortably located. He was suffering still from the wounds sustained during the fight on the 31st, one of which had been inflicted after he was helpless by a Dutchman, who deliberately fired on him at a distance of twenty yards, and subsequently robbed him of watch and money!

By noon the reconnaissance was at an end,—the place was found to be clear of the horrible girdle that for seven months had encompassed it,—and then the Market Square became a scene of unrestrained enthusiasm. The Town Guard got itself into position ready to do honour to the warriors who had come through fire and blood to release their fellow-countrymen, while every nook and corner of the broken hamlet was filled with excited, cheering folks—folks whose vocal cords seemed scarcely to have suffered from scant fare and unceasing vigils, and who yelled as though by sheer force of lung power they meant to swell their song of jubilation to the four corners of the earth!

Perhaps the march past of the united relief columns was the most unique and imposing ceremony ever performed within the confines of such a "chicken-run." Here, in this tiny compass, the whole empire veritably met together—South Africans, Australians, Canadians, English, Scots, and Irishmen, Indians, Cape Boys—all following one another, unit after unit, like some quaint scenic procession of the nations. There were the bronzed colonels—Baden-Powell, and Mahon, and Plumer, now household names

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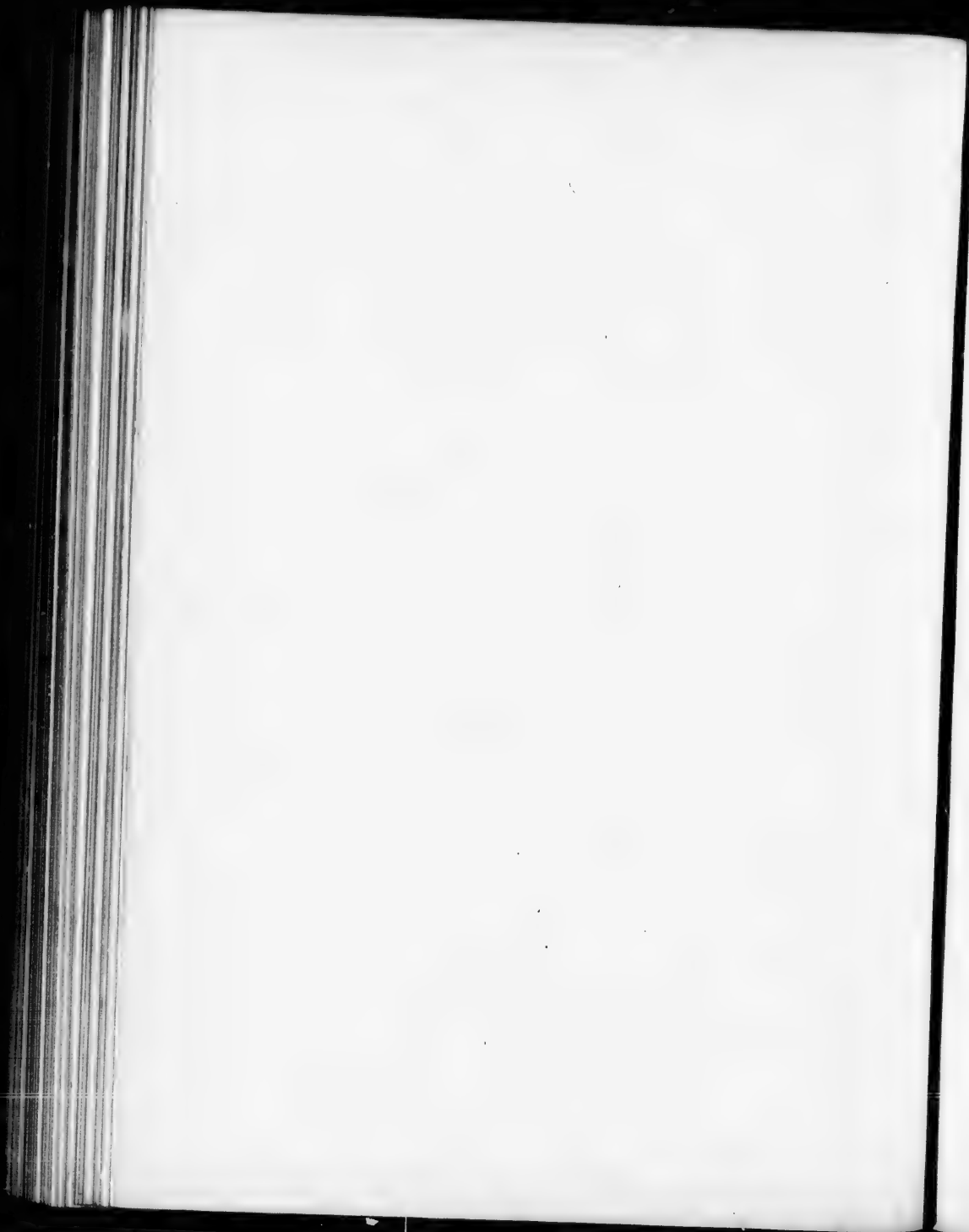
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**THE LAST ATTACK ON MAPEKING: B.S.A. POLICE ESCORTING BOER PRISONERS  
 TO THE GAOL**

Drawing by H. M. Paget, from materials supplied by Major F. D. Baillie,  
 Special Correspondent of the *Morning Post*



## The Relief

throughout the world—accompanied by their staffs, the *élite* of the embattled array. There were the glorious 12-pounders—M Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery, whose every limber looked dear to the eyes that long had been strained in eagerness for their coming—and their guardians, the helmeted band of staunch and sturdy gunners, who carried the voice of Empire far and wide—there were the plumed and mettlesome Colonials, very fighting-cocks at the sniff of war—there was the lion rampant in the form of the Union Brigade (the picked portions of it from the Royal Fusiliers, Royal Scots, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and Royal Irish Fusiliers), a right regal company, the very sight of which in common times would have caused the heart of Britons to throb, and which now sent the cup of patriotic rapture brimming over. Cheers or tears? Shouts or sobs? It was a "toss"-up which would supersede the other, and amid the stupendous *fracas* even the dauntless hero of this unparalleled, soul-stirring outburst turned aside that none should view the emotion that threatened to overwhelm him.

The painter, when he depicted Agamemnon in the hour of sublime sacrifice, drew a veil over the features of the chief. He judged the supreme moment of human exultation too sanctified for common gaze. Even so must we draw the veil of silence over this supreme moment in the life of the saviour of Mafeking . . . the soundless epic is the more sonorous.

The parade over, addresses were presented and the usual formalities gone through. The gratitude of the town for the relief—the appreciation of the magnificent work done by Colonel Baden-Powell, and the stupendous energy of the succouring forces, were all dilated on and thanks returned. A hailstorm of cheers then broke out—cheers for Queen and country, for Baden-Powell, Mahon, Plumer, Colonel Rhodes, Major Karri Davies; in fact, every one cheered every one else, for all were too deserving, too heroic, to overlook the deserts and heroism of those who had imperilled their lives over and over again to maintain the prestige of their native land. So passed the day, and at night chums and comrades gathered together and jested and laughed, and told yarns of skirmish and sortie and surprise, till they sank to sleep in their greatcoats and blankets, fairly worn out with their eleven days and nights of boot and saddle.

On the 19th, the garrison assembled for a last, a solemn function. A great thanksgiving and memorial service was held at the cemetery, and all bade a last farewell to those who had shared with them the tribulations of the siege without reaping the harvest of honour their hands had sown.

At the close of the impressive ceremony three volleys were fired over the noble dead who had given their lives to attain the great

## The Transvaal War

end, and then an effort was made to sing the National Anthem, but the notes were quavering with the emotion which these hitherto fearless men now feared might unman them.

Finally Colonel Baden-Powell—a little abruptly to cover the touching nature of his farewell—addressed the garrison:—

"We have been a happy family during the siege. The time has now come for breaking up. When we were first invested I said to you, 'Sit tight and shoot straight.' The garrison has sat tight and shot straight, with the present glorious result. Many nice things have been said about me at home, but it is an easy thing to be the figurehead of a ship. The garrison has been the rigging and sails of the good ship Mafeking, and has brought her safely through her stormy cruise."

He then thanked the ladies, beginning with the matron of the hospital, whose pluck and devotion could not be sufficiently extolled. Turning to the Protectorate Regiment, he said:—

"To you I need say nothing. Your roll of dead and wounded tells its own tale."

Shaking hands with Colonel Hore he thanked him for the assistance he had given him, and to the artillery, under Major Panzera and Lieutenant Daniel, he said:—

"You were armed with obsolete weapons, but you made up for these by your cool shooting and the way you stuck to your guns."

The colonel afterwards turned to the British South Africa Police:—

"I need not repeat to you men the story of the little red fort on the hill, which Cronje could not take."

And to the Cape Police, under Captain Marsh, he addressed himself as follows:—

"You have not been given an opportunity of doing anything dramatic, but throughout the siege you have held one of the nastiest places in the town, where the enemy were expected at any moment, and where you were always under fire."

The colonel next made some graceful remarks to the Town Guard. He compared them to a walnut in a shell; saying that people thought that they had but to break the shell to get at the kernel. But the enemy had learnt better. They had got through the husk and found they could get no hold on the kernel. In conclusion, he announced that any civilians who wished to return to their ordinary occupations immediately might do so. Those who had none to return to, whose billets had been lost or businesses ruined, would be permitted in the meantime to draw trench allowances and to remain on duty in the inner defences.

## The Relief

Major Gould Adams was then cordially thanked for all the excellent work he had done as Town Commandant, after which the Railway Division (under Captain Moore) and Lieutenant Layton (who had received a commission for his splendid services) were addressed:—

"I cannot thank you enough for what you have done. You have transformed yourselves from railway-men to soldiers. Your work is not yet done, because it will be your business to reopen communication and get in supplies."

To the Bechuanaland Rifles Colonel Baden-Powell exclaimed:—

"Men, you have turned out trumps. With volunteers one knows that they have been ably drilled, but there is no telling how they will fight. I have



MAFEKING RAILWAY STATION—THE FIRST TRAIN ARRIVING FROM THE NORTH AFTER THE RELIEF. (Photo by D. Taylor, Mafeking.)

been able to use you exactly as Regular troops, and I have been specially pleased with your straight shooting. The other day, when the enemy occupied the Protectorate Fort, they admitted that they were forced to surrender by your straight shooting, under which they did not dare to show a hand above the parapet."

The chief delighted the juvenile Cadet Corps by giving them their meed of praise for their conduct as soldiers, concluding with, "I hope you will continue in the profession, and will do as well in after life."

He then turned to the outsiders, the Northern Relief Force under Colonel Plumer, which had borne the brunt of the seven months' fighting, and expressed his regret that they had been

## The Transvaal War

too weak to relieve the town "off their own bat." But he eulogised the splendid work done in bad country and climate. The Southern Force under Colonel Mahon were congratulated on having made a march which would live in history. Their chief was complimented on the magnificent body of men he commanded, while the Imperial Light Horse, associated as it was with memories of Ladysmith, Colonel Baden-Powell declared he was especially pleased to see, as these would be able, in consequence of their own experience, to sympathise with the people in Mafeking.

So the amazing defence of Mafeking was over! For seven months the gallant little town had withstood every ingenious device of the Boers, and in the end it had come off victorious. The first shot was fired on the 16th of October, and from that day the rumble of bombardment had been the accompaniment of almost every hour between the rising and setting of the sun. And now all was serene and still, and only the battered walls of the once neat little hamlet told the terrible, the glorious tale of British doggedness and British pluck.

### HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED BY THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

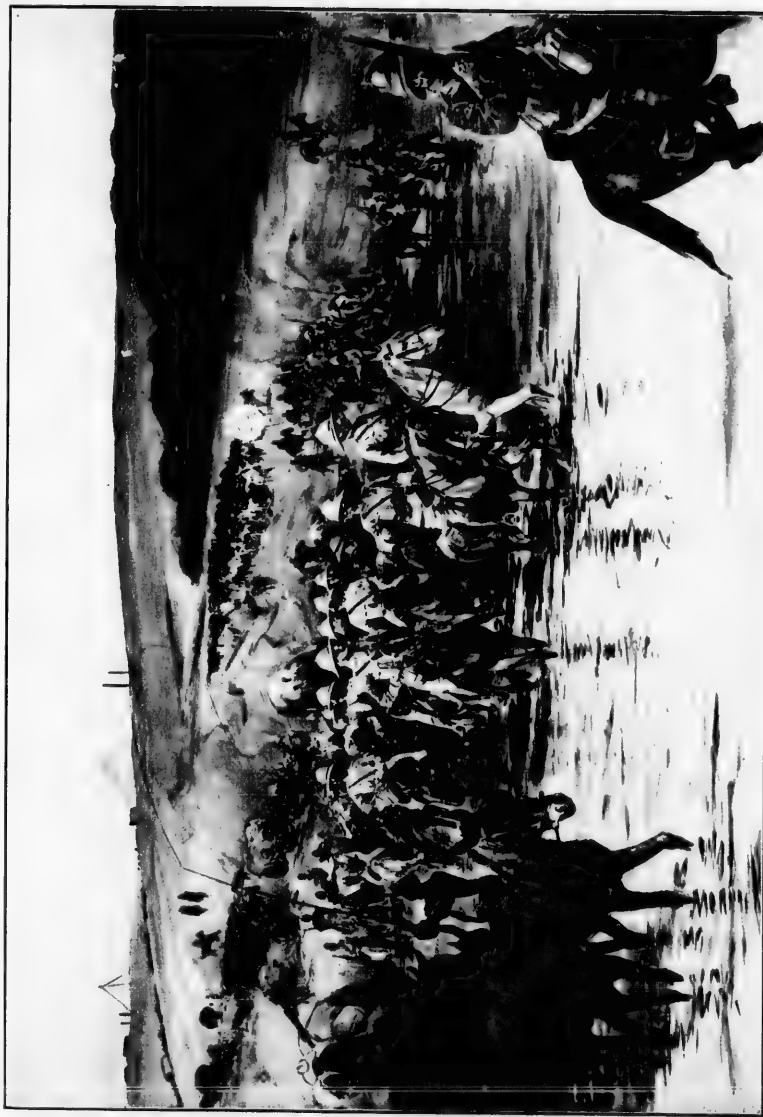
For some time the ears of London had been pricked up in anxious expectation. Lord Roberts had promised to relieve Mafeking by the 18th of May, and the Field-Marshal was known to be punctuality personified. All the town remained in a state of suppressed excitement, little flags were selling like wildfire, and big flags were being got into readiness for the great, the longed-for word. Early in the morning of the 17th the papers were anxiously perused, and man asked man if any news had leaked out. The 18th arrived. Nothing was known. The War Office maintained its adamant calm. The day grew middle-aged, almost old—then, as the shutters were about to go up (twenty minutes past nine was the exact hour), one telegram of Reuter's fired the fuse, and London, followed presently by the whole British Empire, was ablaze with excitement. The flame, like most flames, broke out almost unnoticed. Some one on a cycle—some one in a cab, heard the glorious three words, and sped breathless to carry the contagion of his rapture far and wide. Street after street began to smoulder—to glow; and, presto! the town was one vast conflagration! Such a furnace of patriotism had never been seen within the confines of the staid metropolis. By ten o'clock the populace of one consent had run wild into the streets—the houses

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Lord Roberts Lord Kitchener

# LORD ROBERTS AND HIS ARMY CROSSING THE VAAL RIVER

Drawing by R. M. Paxton, from a Sketch by W. B. Wollen, R.I.





## How the News was Received

were too cramped to hold them—they ran wild, roaring and yelling and shouting and singing, passing into the heart of the Capital in dense armies—passing? nay!—for soon none could pass, but had merely to be propelled good-humouredly by the compact mass that surged apparently to no destination whatever. Whence came the clamouring hosts it was impossible to say—they seemed to rise from the earth, so rapidly, so mysteriously, did their numbers increase. Liberty, equality, fraternity, was the motto of this memorable night. All ages, and ranks, and sexes were linked together in the bonds of sympathetic patriotism—countess or coster, duke or drayman, it was all one—an identical beam of triumph imparted a relationship to every British face. Minutes had scarcely grown into hours before the Union Jack fluttered from every window, from every cart and 'bus, from every hand, and the roar of human joy was as the roar of the ocean in a tempest. At the theatres, as at the railway stations, the crowds heard and wondered only for a moment, for the electrical news got into their midst, and they on the instant took up the cry and the cheer, and repeated them with all their might. Indeed, theatrical performances were suspended while the joyous audiences sang and re-sang "Rule, Britannia" and "God Save the Queen," and then, unsatisfied, tore into the open to let off steam as it were, and view a sight which never before has been witnessed, and probably never again will be visible in the precincts of London Town. The Mansion House, where the display of the message had caused a huge concourse to assemble, was next besieged, and the old walls literally shook with the mighty roar of the multitude. The "National Anthem" swelled out thunderously with volume that was almost awe-striking as the combined voice of a Handel Festival, and shouts for the Lord Mayor grew and grew, and became deafening as that honoured citizen and splendid patriot showed himself.

He then delivered the following speech: "I wish the music of your cheers could reach Mafeking. For seven long weary months a handful of men has been besieged by a horde. We never doubted what the end would be. British pluck and valour when used in a right cause must triumph. The heart of every one of you vibrates with intense loyalty and enthusiasm, I know, and the conscience of every one of you assures you that we have fought in a righteous and just cause." The crowd, incapable of silence for very long, broke into "Rule, Britannia," and when this outburst of emotion was expended, the Lord Mayor continued: "We have fought for our most glorious traditions of equality and freedom, not for ourselves alone, but for the men of all those nations who have settled in South Africa and who were under the protection of the British flag." Three cheers for Colonel Baden-Powell were then called for, and three for Lord Roberts, and these having been heartily given, he

## The Transvaal War

said: "The people of Bloemfontein and Mafeking are now singing 'God Save the Queen'; you can do it for yourselves." This they proceeded to do not once but twenty times through the livelong hours of the night. Meanwhile the following practical telegram was despatched by the Lord Mayor:—

"To BADEN-POWELL, Mafeking, *via* Cape Town.

"Citizens London relieved and rejoiced by good news just received. Your gallant defence will long live in British annals. Cable me what money wanted for needs of garrison and inhabitants after long privations.

"ALFRED NEWTON, *Lord Mayor.*"

At the same time a huge portrait of Colonel Baden-Powell was displayed in front of the Mansion House, and the strains of "God Save the Queen" and "Rule, Britannia" were now intermingled with the lively tune of "For he's a jolly good fellow." These combined choruses were echoed and re-echoed, and carried along like a gigantic stream of sound into the suburbs of London, into sleeping Kensington and remote Clapham, so that men and women turned in their beds—sat up, terrified at first, then realising the situation, gave up thought of rest, and listened with swelling hearts to the triumphant din. And so, on and on—through the night till morning broke!

Then, the whole face of London seemed transmogrified. National emblems—red, white, blue, yellow, green, stars and stripes—draping the houses and festooning the roads, gave the town the aspect of one huge bazaar. Balconies were decorated, awnings thrown out, and in some cases, to give a touch of realism, bathing towels<sup>1</sup> were hung from the verandahs. People passing by, and ignorant of the double meaning of the curious drapery, shrugged their shoulders, scoffed—then, awakened by a flash of illumination, looked again and broke into renewed cheers. Before the dwelling of the mother of the defender of Mafeking a vast crowd collected, wielding flags and laurels, and displaying in their midst the bust of the hero with a British lion crouching at his feet. Cheers rent the air, and increased in volume when the proud parent of this splendid Briton appeared on the balcony and acknowledged the demonstration. The glad tumult in front of this point of attraction continued throughout the day, people coming from far and wide here to vent their ecstasy of enthusiasm—some in shouts, many in tears.

By nightfall, the whole Empire was pouring forth its excitement in congratulatory telegrams, for, four minutes after the receipt of the intelligence in London the news had passed over the Atlantic cables and was in the New York office of the Associated Press,

<sup>1</sup> The hero of Mafeking at Charterhouse was nicknamed "Bathing Towel."

## How the News was Received

whence it was forwarded to the farthest limit of the North American Continent. Canada, New South Wales, Sydney, and all the other colonies whose bravest and best had contributed to the great doings in the Transvaal, were now aglow with bunting and illuminations. Church bells pealed, processions passed shouting and rejoicing, ships were dressed from truck to taffrail, and prayers and anthems of praise were got ready to be offered up on the following day at all churches.

Thus, for a brief space, was seen a vast concourse of millions of souls of differing opinions, customs, and creeds, diffused even to the remotest corners of the British-speaking world, yet closely united by a bond of fraternal sympathy in consequence of the triumph of British manhood in the most unique ordeal that the loyalty of any nation has been called upon to endure.

## CHAPTER VI

### FROM KROONSTAD TO JOHANNESBURG

FROM the 12th to the 22nd of May was spent by the main army, at Kroonstad, where, owing to sickness and other causes, a halt was obligatory. It was necessary that supplies should be collected, an advanced depôt formed, the railway repaired, and the safety of both flanks secured. Meanwhile, efforts were made to protect the farmers who had surrendered from the revengeful tactics of the Boers. Lord Lovat's gillies arrived at Kroonstad and met with the approval of the Commander-in-Chief. General Hutton, with a force of mounted infantry, had reported an attack on Bothaville and the capture of three commandants and about a score of Zarps, from their hiding-place near Smaldeel. On the 20th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade marched out from their camp near Kroonstad, to open up the country on the left of Lord Roberts's main advance along the western fringe of the railway. They were accompanied by the 4th Cavalry Brigade (7th Dragoon Guards and 8th and 14th Hussars), and supported by General Hutton's Brigade of Mounted Infantry (Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders). On the 21st, the cavalry seized the drift at the confluence of the Honing Spruit and the Rhenoster; and on the 22nd, Lord Roberts and the main army, leaving only the 1st Suffolks behind, marched from Kroonstad to Honing Spruit, the third station to the north, and some eighteen or twenty miles off. General Ian Hamilton, after a series of engagements with De Wet's hordes, from Lindley, onwards, had secured an advanced position at Heilbron, while the cavalry division had moved up, crossed the Rhenoster River, and threatening the right rear of the enemy had forced the Dutchmen to leave a strongly-entrenched position on the north bank of the river. The presence of French and Hamilton to west and east of them had served to unnerve the hostile hordes, who now had our cavalry within twenty miles of either flank. They spent their bellicose ardour by destroying some miles of railway, the bridge over the Rhenoster, and some culverts, and then flying in hot haste before the vast machinery of the advancing army, to a new point of defence some twenty miles in front, a point which promised shortly to become equally untenable.

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THE GREAT ADVANCE: ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY (CAVALRY DIVISION) CROSSING THE VAAL

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville

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## From Kroonstad to Johannesburg

May 21st:—New South Wales Mounted Infantry — Wounded severely, Lieutenant A. J. M. Onslow. 1st Royal Irish—Lieutenant M. H. E. Welch.

On the 23rd, Lord Roberts and his majestic and magnificent apparatus of war, its thousands of gallant souls, its multiplicity of vehicles, its endless supplies and zoological train, encamped on the south bank of the Rhenoster River. The Boers, apparently demoralised in their preparations for resistance, and having had their left flank turned by Hamilton at Heilbron, were now continuously "on the run." Meanwhile burghers hourly came in to surrender arms and ammunition, the last vestige of truculence having evaporated. The Boer Government telegraphed to Lord Roberts offering to exchange an equal number of prisoners on parole, and threatening if the offer should be refused to remove from Pretoria to some other district the 4000 prisoners now confined there. As to the fate of the Johannesburg mines there was considerable uncertainty; reports declared they would be destroyed in the event of entry to the Transvaal by the British, and also that the town itself would be defended, as defence works were being rapidly pushed forward, guns got into position, and trenches and defences constructed.

On the other hand it was stated that, on hearing of the threat to destroy the mines and possibly the town, Commandant Louis Botha had hastened to the President, and in a stormy interview had asserted his intention, if such a thing were contemplated, himself to defend Johannesburg from such an act of vandalism. He concluded by denouncing the diabolical intention and saying, "We are not barbarians." Mr. Kruger did not argue the subject—possibly his conscience tweaked him on the subject of barbarity—but gave in. Terrible altercations were daily taking place between the Boers, the Free Staters, and their mercenaries, and the burghers were inclined to throw all the blame of defeat on the Hollanders who had brought about the war and left the Boers to bear the brunt of the loss to life and property that hostilities entailed. These were merely reports, but they served, as the passage to the north proceeded, to show which way the wind blew.

On the Queen's birthday the 4th Brigade of cavalry crossed the Vaal near Pary's Drift, and the 1st Brigade at a drift farther east of Pary's, while General Ian Hamilton's column was ordered to move towards Boschbank still higher up. They arrived just in time to save the coal-mines from being destroyed. The operation of crossing the Vaal was one of the most risky that has been undertaken in the campaign, as the road down to the drifts led through about six miles of mountainous country forming a narrow pass, well suited to Boer tactics. Fortunately, although the Boers were seen



## The Transvaal War

hovering in the vicinity, the arrival of the cavalry was unexpected, and they made no effective resistance.

It will be seen that here the distribution of the advance underwent a change. General French adhered to his original course on the left, but General Hamilton, screened by Gordon's Cavalry, crossed in front of the main army, and concentrated near Vredefort on the west, thus preparing a little surprise for the Boers, who were collected in their thousands opposite Engelbrecht Drift in the expectation that the British General would continue to proceed towards the north. Meanwhile, the cavalry, to a desultory accompaniment of musketry, was engaged in securing the approaches to Lindique Drift, over which the baggage had to pass. On the 26th, Colonel Henry's Mounted Infantry, and the Bedfordshires, crossed at Viljoen's Drift and there encountered an Irish-American rabble in act of injuring the coal-mines and bridge; and the wreckers—an alcohologically-valiant gang of hirelings—speedily made off, leaving behind them three days' supplies, which came in most handy for the benefit of the troops. By this time General Hamilton had reached Boschbank, and Lord Roberts had arrived at Wolve Hoek.

The Cavalry Division, finding the force of Mounted Infantry had moved to Vereeniging—and thus opened up communication with Lord Roberts's main advance—flew on. On the evening of the 27th they seized the head of the horse-shoe of hills wherein the Boers in large numbers had ensconced themselves. This dashing exploit was attended with the loss of only one Scots Grey and one Carabineer wounded. The position thus gained overlooked the Boers' main position at Klips Wersberg, defending Johannesburg.

While this was going on (on the 27th) Lord Roberts, with the 7th and 11th Divisions, crossed the Vaal facing Vereeniging, and encamped on the north bank, and found vacated several intricately prepared positions whence the Boers had intended to offer opposition. They had abandoned position after position at the approach of one or other of the great feelers of the big British machine that threatened to surround them.

The fact was, this enormous army was moving as an avalanche—stupendous and strong—an avalanche that swept all things before it. Horses and men were in splendid fettle, their spirits were rising, their confidence intense, and all endeavoured to emulate the example in activity set them by the Field-Marshal, who, like a young man of thirty, was up before dawn and working hard till sundown. In spite of the cold nights—especially trying after the heat of midday—the Commander-in-Chief looked healthy and well, while his troops, who had marched magnificently in trying circumstances, needed no finer eulogy than to be described as worthy of him.

A grand march of twenty miles brought the main army on the

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28th, to Klip River, within eighteen miles of Johannesburg—a march so rapid and so well organised that the Boers, who had prepared a delicate salute of five guns with which to welcome the troops, had barely time to hustle their weapons into the train and steam off as some of the West Australian Mounted Infantry dashed into the station! These smart Colonials were very much to the fore all day and showed a vast amount of dash and dexterity. Major Pilkington and a patrol of some thirty of them were moving in advance of the 11th Division in hope to find a suitable drift for the passage of troops and guns across the Klip River. The drift was discovered, but also the Boers—a posse of them hovering among the kopjes that flanked the road. Without ado, the little party prepared themselves for the worst, spreading themselves, rifles in hand, to protect the position they had gained, a position of some importance, since it commanded bridges about a mile and a half to east and west of the road. The party divided into two groups, arranged themselves at each bridge, and endeavoured to make a line—a very thin line—as a uniting link between the groups. It was somewhat like the fable of the frog that tried to blow himself out to the size of a bull—but in this case the minute object's pretence was successful; the thirty isolated men deluded the Boers, and caused them to believe that these sturdy defenders of the drifts were supported by a huge force in reserve. Blazing away with their rifles, the Dutchmen attacked the small party, and an uneven contest commenced and proceeded till dusk. Lieutenant Porter, while directing some operations, was wounded, but fortunately at this juncture there came to his rescue some guardsmen, who were escorting a convoy, and these, owing to the gallant manner in which the drifts had been held, managed in the darkness to get their convoy into safety, and enable the Westralians, whose work was accomplished, to “silently steal away.” Meanwhile, during the whole day, some ten miles to the left—on the west of the railway—sounds of animated knocking portended much activity on the part of Generals French and Hamilton in the neighbourhood of Syferfontein and Klip River. General French was engaged in a reconnaissance in force of the enemy's position. After drawing the fire of all the Dutch guns, and consuming a good deal of powder, the casualties on the part of the cavalry were small—about five—mostly Inniskillings. On the 29th of May, part of the Cavalry Division, General Ian Hamilton's Mounted Infantry, the 19th and 21st Brigades, and some Colonials who had moved parallel to the main advance since it left the Vaal, found themselves about twelve miles south of Johannesburg. East of Doornkop some 4000 Boers, with six guns, had taken up a menacing position, strengthened with various natural

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obstacles, while the ground had been blackened with grass fires to afford an effective background to approaching kharki. The troops, supported by the guns, at once steadily advanced to attack the Boer centre, while Generals French and Hutton operated on the west to turn the right flank of the position. After an hour's smart fighting the infantry were able to push on, Porter's brigade having ridden five miles to the west, and turned the enemy's right, while the infantry, with fixed bayonets, had driven the enemy from every cherished kopje. In the attack, the Gordons in the centre of the right, the City Imperial Volunteers in the centre on the left, advanced gradually on the Boer position. The gallant nature of the advance over the burnt and blackened ground, which made the infantry into targets for the foe, excited the admiration of all. Grandly the Gordons flung themselves upon the enemy, in spite of the Boer guns and "pom-pom," that dealt death and destruction among their numbers. Seventy of the dashing fellows dropped, and the only consolation for so great a loss was, that by nightfall 6000 Dutchmen were scudding away in the darkness, while General Hamilton was bivouacking on the ground seized from them, and Generals French and Hutton, who had turned the right flank of the position, were threatening Krugersdorp. The conduct of the City Imperial Volunteers was magnificent, and to them, as well as to the Gordons, much of the credit of the day's work was due. They behaved as skilled troops, taking cover with great ingenuity, and returning the attacks of the enemy with amazing coolness and precision. Their sustained volleys succeeded in clearing out the Boers immediately in front of Roodepoorte. Commandant Botha—not Louis Botha, but a kinsman—with a hundred foreign and Irish subsidised sympathisers, was captured, and, in addition to these, a Creusot gun and twelve waggons of stores and ammunition were secured.

The losses among officers in this engagement were comparatively few. Captain St. J. Meyrick, 1st Gordon Highlanders, was killed. Among the wounded were:—

City Imperial Volunteers—Capt. G. W. Barkley. 1st Gordon Highlanders—Capt. G. E. E. G. Cameron, Lieut.-Col. H. H. Burney, Capt. P. S. Allen, second Lieut. A. Cameron, Surg.-Lieut. A. H. Benson, Dr. R. Hunter. Vol. Co. Gordon Highlanders—Capt. J. B. Buchanan, Lieut. J. Mackinnon, Lieut. H. Forbes. Royal Army Medical Corps—Lieut. A. H. Benson. 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry—Lieut. H. W. Fife (since dead). 10th Hussars—Lieut. T. Lister.

During General French's operations near Klip River, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th, the wounded officers were:—

New Zealand Rifles—Captain Palmer. 7th Dragoon Guards—Major W.

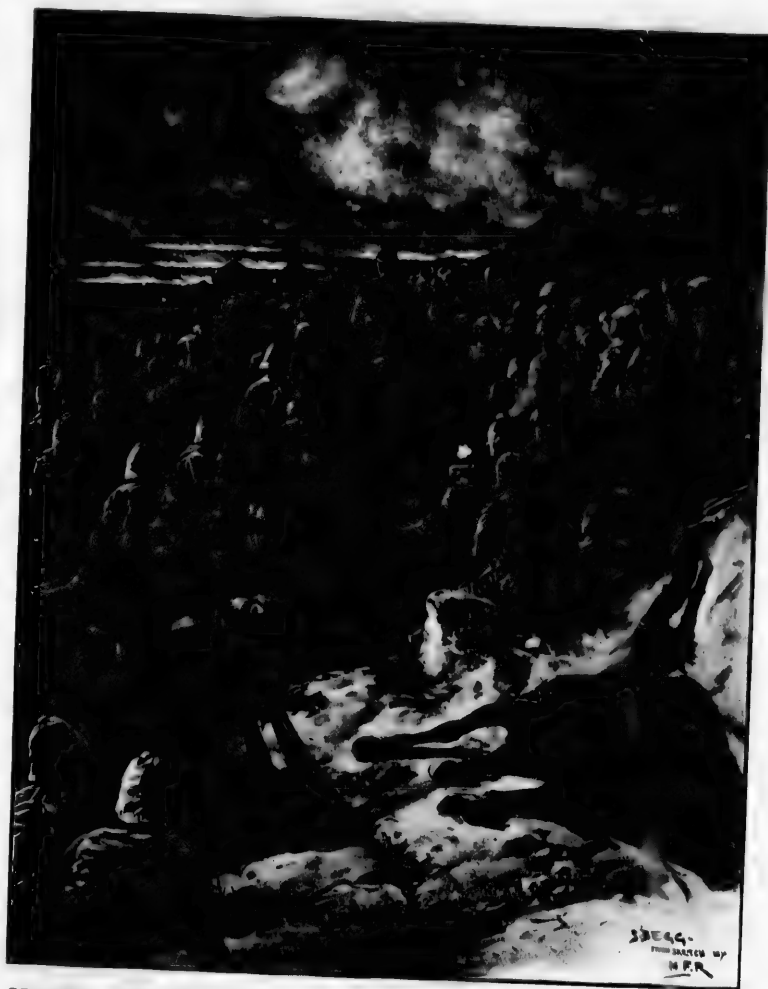
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GENERAL IAN HAMILTON THANKING THE GORDONS FOR THEIR ATTACK  
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## From Kroonstad to Johannesburg

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To return to the main advance on this day (29th). While Generals French and Hamilton were engaging Botha and his hordes outside Johannesburg, turning their flank wherever they posted themselves, Lord Roberts decided to pursue boldly the programme of his main advance upon the enemy's East Rand and Pretoria communications, a programme which was as faultlessly and rapidly carried out as it was skilfully conceived.

From the neighbourhood of the Klip River the troops pushed on rapidly to Germiston without meeting with serious opposition. So swiftly were the movements executed that the nimble Boers were beaten at their own game, and had to turn tail without removing the whole of the rolling-stock. Thus, the Commander-in-Chief came at once into possession of the Junction connecting Johannesburg with Natal, Pretoria, and Klerksdorp by railway, and through a piece of splendid strategy Boer resistance was paralysed, and the railway system of the State was brought completely under his control. Any concentration of forces in Pretoria or on the fringes was now practically impossible.

The history of the hurried capture of this vital strategic position was inspiring. Colonel Henry, with the 8th Mounted Infantry, started at dawn with orders to seize Elandsfontein at all costs. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade in support made a detour to the east towards Boksburg, in a direct line to Pretoria, followed rapidly along the line by Pole-Carew's and Tucker's Divisions. The object of the somewhat wide easterly move was to outflank the enemy's defensible positions and secure the communications to Pretoria, and thus cut off and isolate the force prepared to check the advance of the British. Just as the advance guard neared the Natal line, a train was seen conveying half of the Heidelberg Commando from Volksrust to the north. It was impossible to arrest it, but after firing on the departing machine, the troops proceeded to demolish the line and secure the Natal communications. The Mounted Infantry which, owing to the uselessness of the Klip River Bridge, were without artillery, were now assailed by a party of Boers with guns, who had ensconced themselves in the ridges which menaced the southern road, but nevertheless they pressed forward bent on obeying orders and gaining Elandsfontein. They pushed ever on and on till the great city, the monstrous hive of gold-getters, the scene of Boer despotism and Uitlander servility, became visible from the rolling hills. Momentarily they expected to hear a roar, to see a flare and an upheaval, and to know the worst had come—the mines had been destroyed! But all was silence. The huge town, surrounded in places by a

## The Transvaal War

blanket of smoke, seemed slumbering on the bosom of the undulating downs. In the distance, however, the station showed active. Trains were steaming off to Pretoria. Others with their steam up were preparing to follow. These trains must be arrested, and their freight captured. It was a case, unfortunately, of horse-flesh versus steam. But still it was worth the venture! Off went a section of the Yorkshire Mounted Infantry, galloping like fury to the station, while the main body made for Boksburg; and the Australians, toolless, tore to Knight's Station, and there piling up trollies, boulders—anything, in fact, that came to hand—blocked the line. They were pelted by hidden Boers, but fled carefully to cover after accomplishing their object.

Meanwhile, some of the Yorkshire Mounted Infantry had seized the station, and, with it, three locomotives whose steam was up ready for departure. But the enemy were in strength there—they were at least strong in proportion to the twenty dashing Yorkshire men who had plunged into the mêlée, and these gallant fellows found themselves in a critical position, fighting like demons for their hardly-earned prize with desperate men, whose sole source of salvation lay in the locomotives that stolidly panted and wheezed in utter disregard of the fierce fight raging for their possession. Then, with almost theatrical precision, a vast procession was seen to be approaching: a river of kharki flowing down the southern slopes into the Rand. It was the Mounted Infantry from Boksburg and the Infantry Division—the goodly Grenadiers leading—pouring in their numbers to the rescue of the gallant little band! Thus by nightfall one of the most fateful of the operations of the war was concluded, and Johannesburg was virtually seized without the wrecking of a mine and with little loss of life. During the operations Captain MacEwan, Cameron Highlanders, and Lord Cecil Manners (correspondent to the *Morning Post*) were taken prisoners. Lieutenants Pepper, West Australian Mounted Infantry, Beddington, Imperial Yeomanry, and Forrest, 1st Oxford Light Infantry, were wounded. Immense crowds, surprised to find that the struggle was a matter of hours and not of days, watched the fighting from west and east corners of the town, and the shock of the fall of Elandsfontein disorganised their plans and demoralised themselves.

While this was going on, the Cavalry Division had advanced through the gold mines, having Johannesburg on their right, and was encamped on the west of the town, keeping a wary eye on the Boers, who were fleeing hot-foot to Pretoria.

Within the City of Gold, all was turmoil. On the discovery of the situation there followed a violent up-rising. The Kaffirs, on seeing the Boers repulsed, rushed to the Jews' houses to loot

## From Kroonstad to Johannesburg

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them, and the foreign contingents immediately set out on a species of internal invasion, breaking open shops and stores and houses, and throwing out of doors and windows goods collected for the benefit of needy burgher families. The uproar, however, was speedily suppressed by the firm measures of Dr. Krause. In answer to the flag of truce sent in by the Field-Marshal, this official went out to meet him. There being still many armed burghers in the place, the Transvaal Commandant requested Lord Roberts to postpone his entry for six hours. To avert disturbance this arrangement was agreed to, and Lord Roberts decided to postpone till the 31st his entry into the conquered town.

So Johannesburg was ours! The advance, which appeared to be so rapid, straightforward, and simple, owed these qualities to Lord Roberts's splendid, almost prophetic, instinct for gauging the enemy's expectations with a view to disappointing them; to his strategic manipulation of his cavalry and mounted infantry, and to the magnificent marching capability of the infantry. Everywhere, the Boers had fenced themselves across the route, sometimes extending their line of defence for twenty miles or more, and everywhere, in dread of having one flank or the other turned, they had been kept oscillating between stubborn resistance and rapid flight till their nerves had given way, and they had scuttled back and back to their undoing. At the Vet, the Zand, the Valsch, the Rhenoster, and the Klip Rivers, they had cunningly prepared themselves, till, with the infantry menacing them in front and the cavalry and infantry threatening both flanks, they had realised that retreat was inevitable. Their last hope had been set on the city of mines; and now from thence, a routed, raging rabble, they were fleeing in despair.

The splendid progress of the infantry was a remarkable achievement, of which enough cannot be said. It was no mere feat of pedestrianism. It was a march in face of an enterprising enemy, and harassed with discomforts sufficiently multifarious to try the endurance of a Socrates. A scorching sun by day and a frigid temperature by night, occasional sand blasts rendering drier than ever parched throats already dry as husk from the tramp through a sand-clogged and almost waterless country, were but items in the programme. If water there chanced to be, it was ochreous and fouled by the passage of many quadrupeds, and such food as there was—bully beef and adamantine biscuit—demanded the jaws and digestion of an alligator. Yet these sturdy fellows plodded along, lumbering through sand drifts and squelching in mire and morass, or laid themselves to rest on the hard or soggy ground with a philosophy so devil-may-care as almost to fringe on the sublime. With



## The Transvaal War

unquenchable gaiety, they had accomplished a march of 254 miles (the distance from Bloemfontein to Elandsfontein) in eighteen days, giving as an average fourteen miles a day. (This calculation naturally excludes the ten days' halt at Kroonstad.) From Kroonstad to Elandsfontein, a distance of some 126 miles—covered in seven days (22nd to 29th)—marching had gone forward at the rate of eighteen miles a day. Napoleon's much vaunted march from the Channel to the Rhine in 1805 showed an average of sixteen miles a day, when the distance traversed was 400 miles, and the time taken twenty-five days. But that march, unopposed throughout, was comparatively plain sailing. Quicker forced marches have been known,<sup>1</sup> but in the present case the march was continuous, and may be said to beat all records of rapid marching under equally inconvenient conditions.

The twenty-four hours were allowed to pass. Then, at the entrance of the town Dr. Krause met the Commander-in-Chief, and rode with him to the government offices, and introduced to him the heads of the various departments, all of whom were requested to continue their respective duties till they should be relieved of them.

To those who had never seen Johannesburg the first glimpse was a surprise. Strangely incongruous did it seem to move from the isolation and rugged simplicity of the open veldt to the centre of a large and peculiarly civilised town. The note of modernity was sounded on every side. Buildings more than magnificent greeted the eye accustomed only to homely farms and mushroom staadts. Tramways ribbed the streets, electric lights gleamed a whiter glare than moonbeams, and nineteenth-century luxury, and in some cases refinement, were in evidence at every turn. But the public buildings were closed, and the handsome shops boarded up for precaution's sake, while the streets were thinly populated, owing to the fact that many of the British sympathisers had been expelled, and the Boer community was on commando.

But though at first the place was deserted, by degrees people began to trickle in, and by the time the square in front of the government buildings was reached there was a goodly throng. The Vierkleur was still flying when Lord Roberts, at the head of General Pole-Carew's division, marched into the town; but presently the keys were formally surrendered, the flag was hauled down, and a small Union Jack, worked by Lady Roberts, was hoisted in its place.

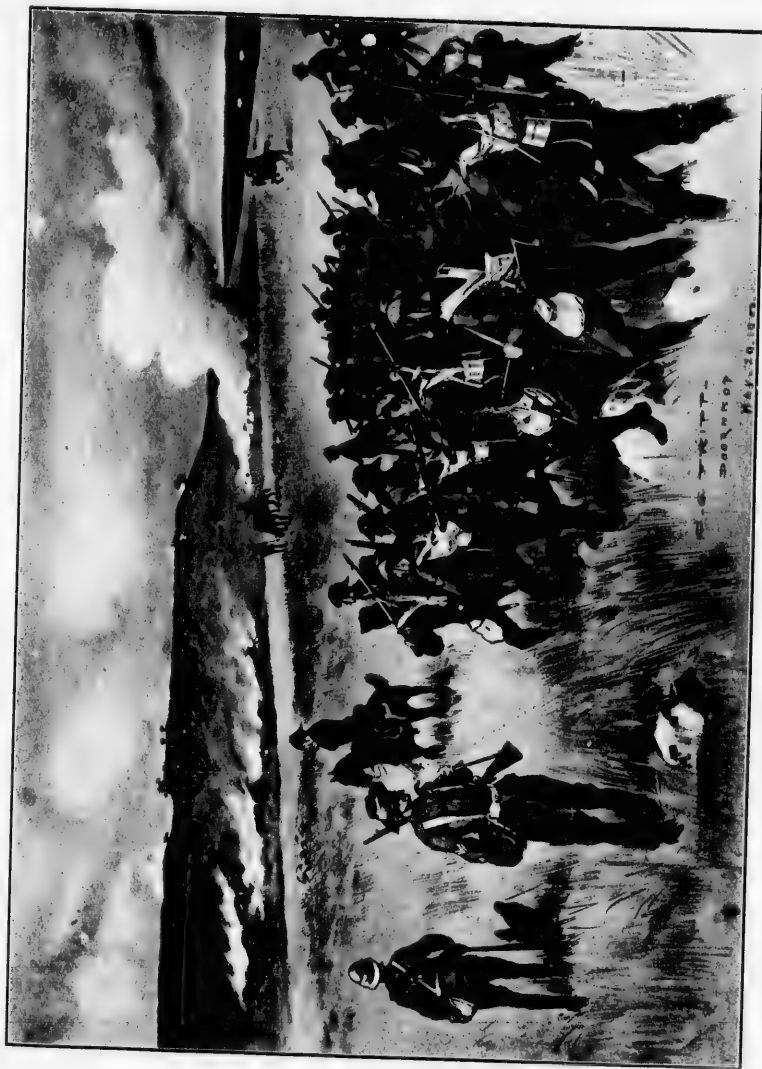
At the conclusion of the ceremony the rousing strains of the Guards' band were heard, and the 11th and 7th Divisions marched past, with the Naval Brigade, the heavy artillery, and two Brigade Divisions of Royal Horse Artillery. General Ian Hamilton's column

<sup>1</sup> See vol. iv. p. 41.

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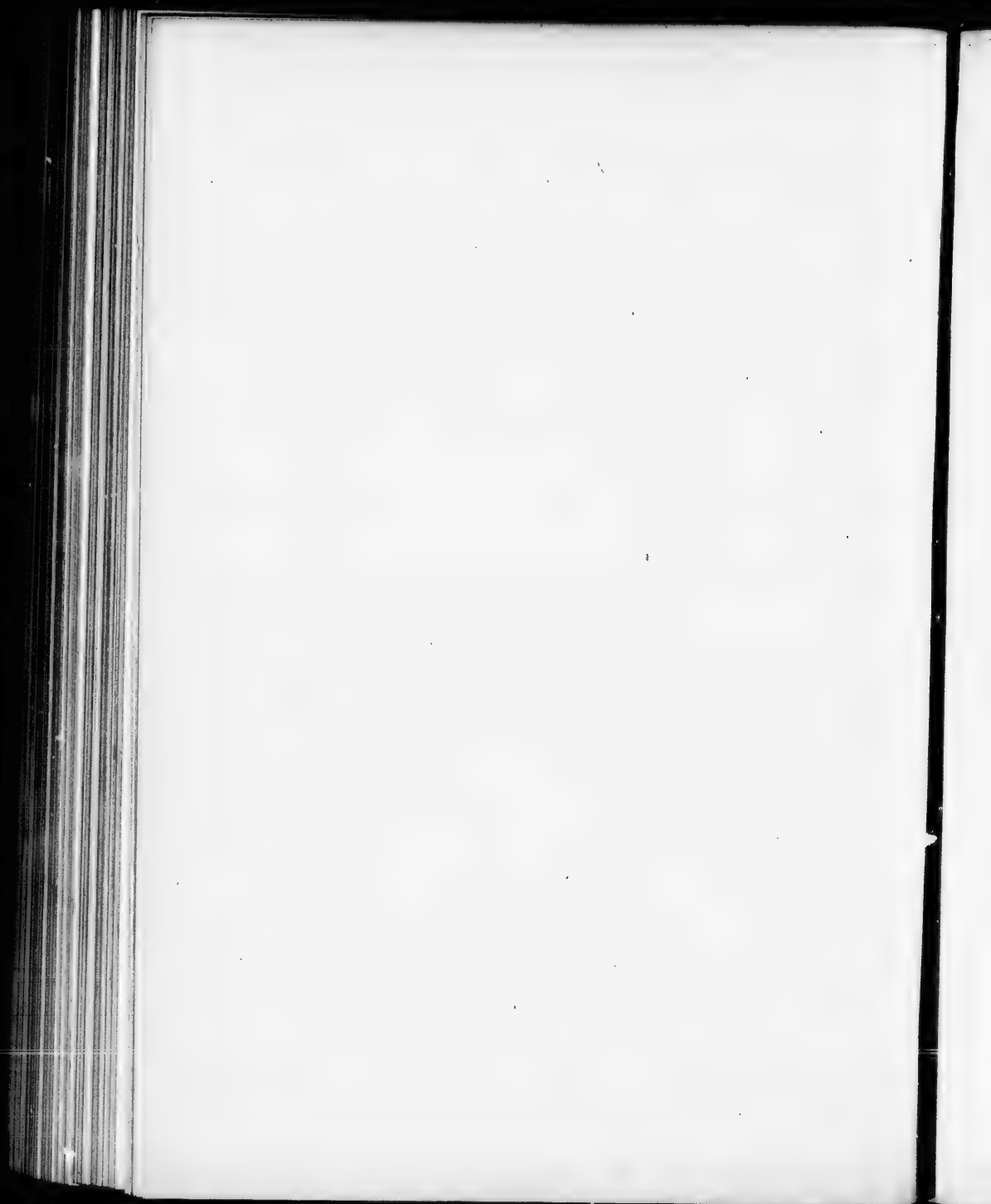
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THE CITY OF LONDON IMPERIAL VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING GENERAL HAMILTON'S LEFT FLANK IN THE ACTION AT DOORNKOP ON THE 29TH OF MAY

Drawing by C. E. Fripp, R.W.S., War Artist



## From Kroonstad to Johannesburg

and the Cavalry Division and Mounted Infantry were too far away to take part in the proceedings.

It was an impressive spectacle; one ever to be remembered. From afternoon till night, troops—great, brawny, bronzed, and workmanlike Britons—came clanking in procession through the town, while from balconies and windows banners and flags were



VAAL RIVER DEVIATION BRIDGE AT VEREENIGING, NEARLY COMPLETED.  
(Photo by W. H. Gill, London.)

waved, and gay ladies, many of them Englishwomen, wild with excitement and enthusiasm, threw down flowers and sweets and cigarettes to give vent to their unrestrained joy. Far into the evening the stream of kharki continued ceaselessly to flow under the magesian rays of the electric lights till the infantry had passed to their camp, three miles to the north, and Lord Roberts had settled himself at Orange Grove.

## CHAPTER VII

### GENERAL RUNDLE'S MARCH TO SENEKAL

WHILE Lord Roberts was moving from Bloemfontein, co-operative action was being taken elsewhere. On the 2nd of May the Boers evacuated Thabanchu and trekked towards the north, and on the following day General French, leaving General Rundle in command, started to join Lord Roberts's main scheme. Soon after General Brabant joined General Rundle's force.

On the 4th, General Rundle moved forward from Thabanchu, attacked the enemy, captured their positions, and headed them eastward. There was little hard fighting, the General's movements being mostly carried out with so much celerity, and strategical and tactical skill, that the enemy, seeing British forces apparently in strength everywhere, judged it advisable to move from post to post rather than run the risk of being mopped up.

On Friday, the 11th of May, Colonel Grenfell, with the 2nd Battalion of Brabant's Horse, attacked the Boers at Ropin's Kop, but was overpowered by the enemy and forced to retire, with several wounded. On the following day, Saturday, he, however, drove the Boers out of their position, and captured Newberry Mills at Leeuw River, thus depriving the Dutchmen of an immense store of flour and grain which it had been their ambition to seize. This smart piece of work was accomplished almost without casualties. While these operations had been going forward, some 500 of the Yeomanry had occupied the northern slopes of Thaba Patacka, a position whence they hoped to attack the Boers who might be slinking off in the direction of Basutoland. General Boyes, on the west, was equally active, to the dismay of the Boers, who, owing to General Rundle's clever strategy, imagined the British held a front of over twenty miles.

On the 13th of May General Rundle advanced to Brand's Drift, twenty miles to the north-east, taking prisoners and accepting the surrender of many Free-staters, who were perished with cold and exposure, and sickened by defeat. Meanwhile, General Brabant, performing like operations, was slowly moving northwards. On the night of the 15th, Ladybrand was occupied by a force of the Glamorganshire Yeomanry, and thus the two Generals maintained possession, by magnificent strategic moves,

## General Rundle's March to Senekal

of the whole southern corner, which is practically the granary of the Free State, gradually scaring away the enemy from the country through which they passed. On the 24th, a simultaneous movement was made, Brabant's Colonials marching to occupy Ficksburg, while General Rundle with General Campbell's Brigade, followed by that of General Boyes, proceeded towards Senekal.

During the march an unfortunate incident took place. On reaching Mequaling's Nek, a rumour reached General Rundle that the Boers were in retreat from Senekal, consequently on the next day, the 25th, Major Dalbiac and Major Ashton, R.M.A. (Intelligence Officer to the Division), were ordered to investigate the nature of the water supply, and to find a camping ground in the neighbourhood of the town. Major Dalbiac and a company, mainly composed of Middlesex Yeomanry, accompanied Major Ashton as escort, and the party left at dawn and proceeded to Senekal. Here they encountered apparently peaceful inhabitants, and were entirely ignorant of the fact that the Boers had merely vacated the place for the purpose of hiding themselves in a hilly coign of vantage, which practically commanded the streets of the town. Major Ashton proceeded with the inquiries he was deputed to make, and received from a citizen the keys of the official buildings, which had been left by the Landrost, who with the postmaster and other responsible persons had decamped. Then came the surrendering of arms, and while this was going on, suddenly, without warning, a heavy fusillade was launched at the Yeomanry who formed a group round Major Ashton. For a moment chaos reigned; then all sprung to action. The Boers, delighted at their surprise, blazed away fast and furious, while the two Majors, gathering together their little band, made hurried arrangements. Major Ashton, with some ten men, enclosed himself and promptly commenced firing on the incoming enemy, while Major Dalbiac with a score of the Yeomanry, dashing galloped off in hope of taking the enemy in rear. But the Boers were many and the unfortunate Yeomanry quite outnumbered. No sooner had they wheeled round the hill, than rifles poured a withering fire on them. Six horses dropped even as the men dismounted, and the ground, open and quite devoid of cover, was strewn in one moment with the slain and the suffering. Major Dalbiac almost instantaneously dropped dead. He was shot through the neck, and four men shared his fate. Lieutenant Hegan Kennard, wounded in the face, was in a desperate plight, while nearly all who remained were injured. Some half-a-dozen men had been sent back with the horses on the first outbreak of the attack, and these only of the valorous band escaped. Meanwhile news of the ambushade had been carried

## The Transvaal War

to General Rundle, who instantly ordered off the Wilts Yeomanry, 2nd Grenadiers, and 2nd East Yorks, with artillery, to the succour of the unfortunate party. These arrived in time to save Major Ashton. He had fortunately occupied the side of the town towards which the British approached, and the Boers, at the first sound of the guns which had been directed against the kopje where they had ensconced themselves, made off with all possible speed. By the time General Rundle had neared the town, it had resumed its pristine state of innocence, and the inhabitants were preparing effective demonstrations of loyalty. In the evening the remains of the unfortunate dead at the foot of the hill were recovered, and it was found that Major Dalbiac's body had been rifled by his dastardly opponents of every article of value, and even the ribbons of his medals were missing. On the 26th, General Rundle with the 8th Division entered the town and formally took possession of it.

The remains of Major Dalbiac and the four men of the Middlesex Yeomanry who were killed in the unfortunate affair were buried with military honours, the General and Staff attending the funeral. A patrol of the Hants Yeomanry, while out scouting, got in touch with the enemy, and escaped by what is called the skin of their teeth. Many had very narrow escapes, and one man was killed. Sergeant-Major Foulkes, whose horse was shot under him, was saved through the gallantry of Private Andrews, who returned and bore off his dismounted comrade, while Captain Seely and others behaved in like manner to ensure the safety of those left without mounts.

### GENERAL COLVILE AND THE HIGHLAND BRIGADE

Of the Highland Brigade since the tragedy of Majersfontein and the smart fight at Koodoesberg little has been said. Their brilliant march and action before Paardeberg, in which General MacDonald was wounded, served to demonstrate the stuff of which they were made and to restore their self-confidence and zest for battle. Lord Roberts's gracious speech, delivered at the camp, recalling his pleasant association with the Brigade in India, where "they had helped to make him," and saying that as he had never campaigned without Highlanders, he "would not like to be without them now," had done much to heal the sore which still rankled in many breasts.

On the 1st of May the 9th Division marched from Waterval, picked up the Seaforths at the waterworks, and also the Highland Light Infantry from Bloemfontein. The Division, of which the Highland Brigade, the Seaforths, Black Watch, Argyll and

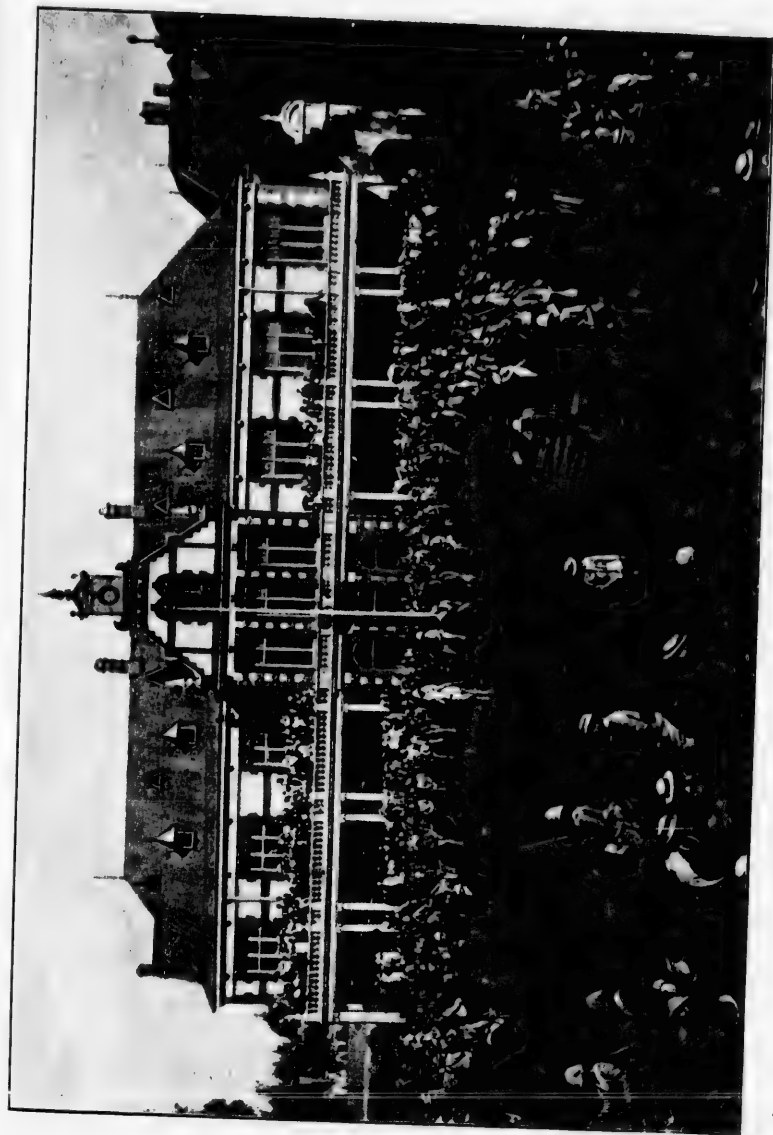
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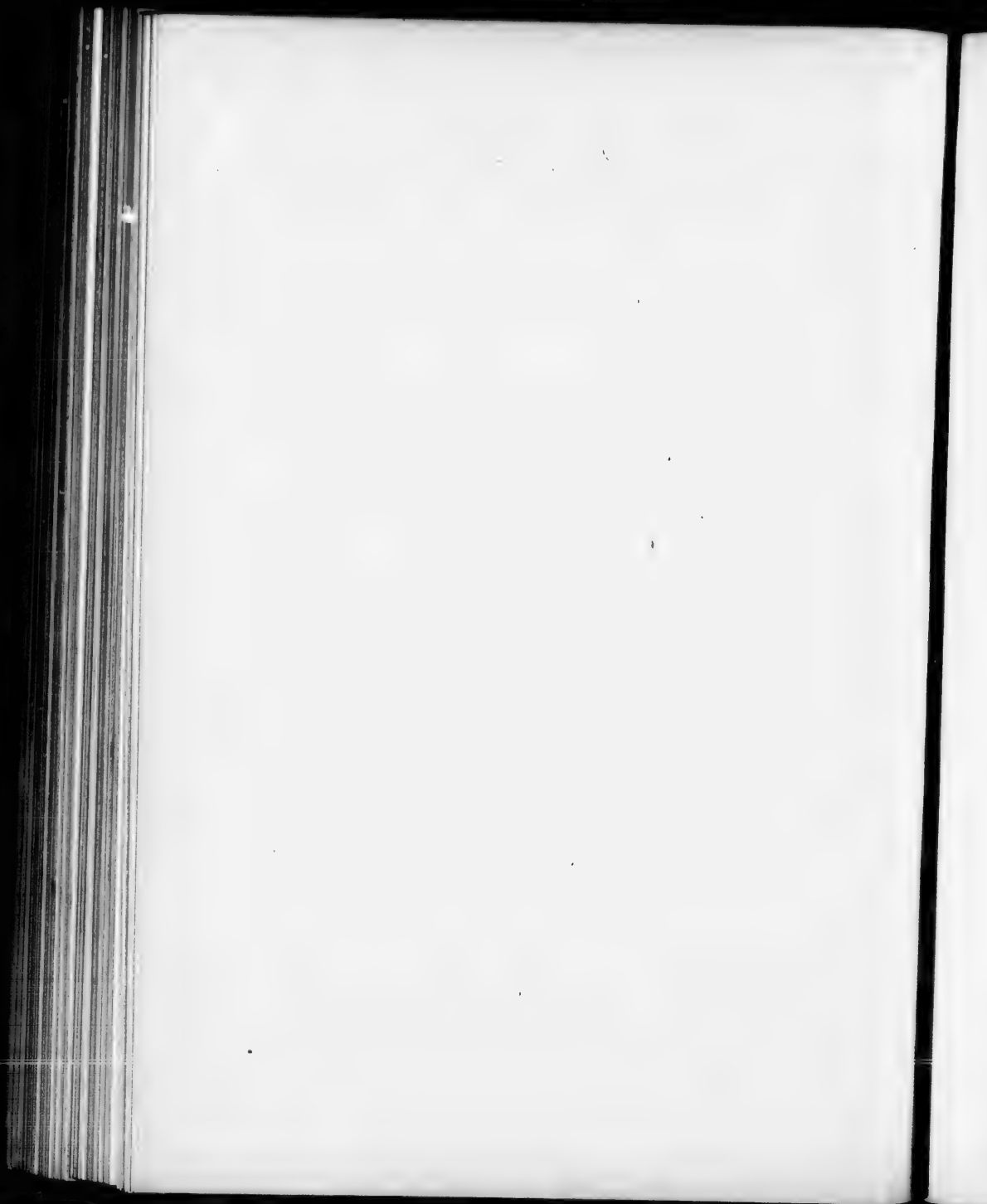
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HAULING DOWN THE TRANSVAAL FLAG AT JOHANNESBURG

Photo by Lionel James





## General Colville and Highland Brigade

Sutherland Highlanders, and Highland Light Infantry formed the infantry battalions, with the 5th Battery Royal Field Artillery, two naval guns (4.7 calibre), and a company of Engineers, was under the command of Major-General Sir H. Colville. The Highland Brigade was commanded by General MacDonald. The Eastern Province Horse, a smart and sportsmanlike set of mounted men, numbering about a hundred, also accompanied the force, and did valuable service in scouting. Later on the force was joined by Lovat's Scouts, but not till the advance was well under way. On the 4th the Brigade bivouacked at Susanna Fountain after an animated tussle with the enemy, who were finally routed by the gallantry of the Black Watch.

The Division reached Winburg, as we know, on the 6th, and remained in possession till the 17th. Then, the Black Watch and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders advanced, leaving behind them the Highland Light Infantry and Seaforths in the town. On the following day the Zand River was crossed. Ventersburg was entered without opposition, the way having been previously swept by Lord Roberts's force which had arrived there on the 10th. Here there was a brief halt—a much needed one—as the troops had marched thirty-four miles in 18½ hours. On the 23rd they proceeded towards Lindley, and were joined *en route* by the remainder of the divisional and brigade troops. On the 24th they reached a point east of Bloemspuit, where they bivouacked. The next day brought them into the teeth of the enemy, who were hiding in a ridge at Maquanstadt. From this point the Dutchmen were driven by the Seaforths, who from thence proceeded to a peaked kopje which commanded the water supply, a position which was at once vigorously contested by the Boers. After a hard fight, in which one officer and three men were wounded, the Seaforths succeeded in occupying the position. Here they were joined by the Black Watch and the 5th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery, the rest of the troops remaining behind at Hopefield till the 26th.

At Bloemberg, a horseshoe-shaped ridge near Koorspruit (an affluent of the Valsche), the Boers were found strongly posted, and no sooner had the Black Watch appeared than they were greeted by a crackling cross-fire that sent them quickly to cover. Here they held the enemy while a wide turning movement was made to the right. The inner side of the horseshoe position was attacked by the Seaforths, while the outer was assailed by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders under Major Urmston, who deftly approached the stony eminence which concealed some sixty of the enemy, and charged with such force and impetuosity that presently the entire position was vacated, and the whole body of Boers,

## The Transvaal War

some 1000 in number, were seen racing over the boulders with more than their usual agility. The Bloemberg Ridge gained, it was promptly occupied by Black Watch and Seaforths.

By midday the passage of the hill was accomplished, and by 4 p.m. the troops had reached Lindley. The expedition had cost them two killed and eleven wounded. The Highland Brigade crossed the Valsche River and bivouacked north of the drift on the Heilbron Road. Still more north—about two miles—went two companies of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to ensconce themselves on a kopje which commanded the road towards Heilbron.

On the afternoon of the 27th the advance was continued. The Highlanders crossed the Rhenoster River at Mildraai, and on the following day, 28th, moved still further forward till stopped by the presence of the enemy, who barred the line of march on the north of Roodeport. The Highland Light Infantry—the advanced guard—were deployed and sent to seize some kraals about 1200 yards from the enemy's position, which sprayed itself over about six miles of country. One company was detached to hold a hill on the right front, supported by the Black Watch, while the Seaforths attempted a turning movement to the left and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders guarded the rear and both rear flanks from a point of vantage on Spitzkop. The artillery blazed copiously for an hour, while the Boers also made animated resistance, but after good sixty minutes of assault the enemy gave way, and the Seaforths succeeded in getting round the right flank, while the Highland Light Infantry and Black Watch gained the centre of the now deserted ridge. But the Boers had only scuttled to other ridges whence they could let loose Pandemonium with increased vigour. Thus the Highlanders came in for murderous attention in front, rear, and flank. Presently to their rescue went the invaluable naval guns, snorting vengeance, and determining to show that, though the Field Artillery became outranged and impotent, there was laudable lyddite to save the situation. On this, and with startling velocity, the Federals removed themselves, and they were stimulated in their departure by long-range volleys from the Highland Light Infantry. While the Dutchmen were speeding into the unknown, the Highlanders triumphant were advancing to a position north of Marksfontein. Having crossed the drift they bivouacked on the other side, while the ox transport moved up to the shelter of their wing. The day's work was not without its pathetic side, for thirty men and three officers were wounded, while two gallant Highlanders were among the slain. The wounded officers were: Seaforth Highlanders—Lieut.-Col. Hughes-Hallet, Lieut. Ratclyffe, and Lieut. Doig.

## From Boshop to Kroonstad

At this time the Duke of Cambridge's Yeomanry were to have met Sir H. Colville, but owing to their failing by an hour or so to join him on his march up from Lindley they were surrounded, and on the 31st were captured by the enemy. The tale of the disaster is told elsewhere. On the 29th, the Division began to move gradually on in caterpillar fashion, drawing up a back segment to propel the forward one, inch by inch, or mile by mile. Mr. Blundell's description in the *Morning Post* of the advance shows how risky and ingenuous a proceeding the movements of baggage in face of the enemy may be. "The route lay over a series of ridges and spruits and along a parallel line of hill on which the Boer forces had taken up their position. The baggage, &c., was first concentrated and taken over the spruit, with the Seaforths as right rear flank guard and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders as rear guard. As the baggage and transport advanced the Highland Light Infantry advanced, and the battalions guarding flank and rear retired from their position and followed the baggage across the drift, while small bodies of the enemy hovered round the retiring rear at a respectful distance and unable to do any serious damage."

Finally at 7 P.M. on the 29th, exactly to time ordered by the chief, the General and his tired warriors marched into Heilbron, having covered within eight days a distance of 126 miles, fighting "a swarm of hornets" at intervals the whole way, and losing in the advance fifty-four wounded and nine killed—a loss in comparison with the work done by no means heavy. Mr. Blundell's description of the class of work and its reward so happily hits off the nature of the movement, that the temptation to quote him is irresistible. "To appreciate the humours of the military situation in these regions, one would have to turn to the experiences of one's schoolboy days with wasps' nests, when, after the capture of the main position, the survivors take to guerilla warfare in the grass, crawling up your trousers and dropping on your neck from unexpected quarters, and inflicting damage to your temper and prestige out of all proportion to the losses incurred or the advantage gained."

### FROM BOSHOP TO KROONSTAD

Christiana, as we know, was occupied on the 16th of May by one of General Hunter's brigades, while Lord Methuen moved his Division from Boshop to Hoopstad, thus bringing his troops into the zone of the great operations, and pursuing his march eastwards along the south bank of the Vaal. (Hunter's Brigade afterwards removed to cover the repair of the line along the Bechu-

## The Transvaal War

analand Railway towards Vryburg, and there for the present we must leave them.)

From Boshop Methuen's force moved on in zigzag fashion, their destination being Kroonstad. From Hoopstad to Bothaville they passed over good roads, through picturesque country, followed for miles by the graceful bends of the Vaal River—a ribbon of silver fringed with willows. The weather was now growing more and more chilly, and after sundown frost began to nip and biting winds to whistle through the bones. Nights were spent in trying to gain warmth, and when dawn came the sun was



HIGHLAND BRIGADE AT THE END OF A LONG FORCED MARCH. (Photo by a British Officer.)

welcomed with thanksgiving. The infantry in these raw mornings had the advantage of the cavalry, as they could work themselves into a glow, but there were other occasions in which the mounted men had their revenge, and could forge on ahead and secure, before the arrival of the lagging pedestrians, all manner of tempting edibles—chickens, ducks, sucking pigs, and the like, which happened to be at the farms. These luxuries were greedily coveted, for, coming along from Boshop some 220 miles, diet had been limited to biscuits—hard, dry, and irresponsible—and any variety in the monotonous fare was received with unqualified rejoicing. Near Bothaville, as dawn broke, a curious episode took place. In the

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**OFFICERS OF THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS**

Photo by Gregory & Co., London

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## The Battle of Biddulph's Berg

distance was spied a tent—a species of farmyard in the centre of the open veldt. Chickens and cattle and a trek waggon fringed the strange mushroom-shaped domain. It being necessary to discover the nature of the occupant of this shanty, one of the military party approached and hallooed. No answer. He roared louder. Then from the inner recess of the tent a burly voice bellowed—"You can't commandeer me; I'm an Englishman. The first Dutchman that pokes his head around here will look like a sieve when I've done with him." To this warlike challenge the British soldier meekly replied—described himself and his business—whereupon a change rapid as amusing came over the scene. Out from the tent, "like a cork from a bottle," burst the inmate, glad past speech, excited past effervescence—wife, children, came rushing forth from their hiding-places, rapture writ in smiling letters over every feature. The British were come—at last—at last! The valiant couple were taken in charge, removed to Bothaville and protected, and their long days of loyal suspense and tribulation were at an end. Then on went the goodly multitude, through streets whose houses fluttered with white, taking with them as they went their Boer prisoners, who, sitting in their own carts, alternately shivered and snarled. At Kroonstad—reached on the 27th of May—they pitched their camps, not in the town itself but discreetly removed from the awful reminiscences of dead horse and beast left by Boer and British armies in their last tussle, and here they thought to take a brief rest before marching away from rail and civilisation. But man proposed and the exigencies of the situation disposed, and by the 1st of June we find Lord Methuen's troops hastening off to the assistance of the 13th Battalion of Imperial Yeomanry at Lindley. To understand the urgent necessity for this detour we must return to Senekal.

### THE BATTLE OF BIDDULPH'S BERG (28TH AND 29TH OF MAY)

So soon as General Rundle entered Senekal—on the 26th of May—he proceeded to make inquiries as to the whereabouts of General Colville, whom he believed to be at Lindley, some forty miles north-east of him. It so happened that General Colville had just vacated that place and continued his march in the direction of Heilbron. No sooner was his back turned than the Boers pounced on Lindley, and not only pounced, but contrived to make themselves instantly aggressive. As ill luck would have it, the Duke of Cambridge's Yeomanry under Colonel Spragge, who had been sent from Kroonstad to join General Colville's force, were caught by the enemy a few miles short of their destination.



## The Transvaal War

They were in the awkward position of having missed General Colville and lost a *pied-à-terre* at Lindley.

In this dilemma a message was sent to General Rundle informing him of the desperate quandary.

The General, instantly reviewing the critical state of affairs, devised a strategical plan which, he thought, would serve—far off as he was—to extricate the entangled forces who were demanding his assistance. He was aware that a posse of Boers was within some six miles of him, circling around towards Bethlehem in the east, and he conceived the scheme of attacking these with such force and determination as to press them hard and force them in their turn to appeal for help from the hordes that were infesting Lindley to the annoyance and dismay of the not yet united British forces who had prayed his aid. This device was masterly in the extreme, as it, so to speak, forced the masses of the enemy to come south in all haste, and thus saved risks of failure which might have resulted from a long movement of infantry over a distance of about forty miles. So, leaving General Boyes with three battalions in occupation of Senekal, General Rundle, with a force consisting of 2nd Grenadier Guards, 2nd Scots Guards, 2nd East Yorkshire, under General Campbell, the 2nd West Kent Regiment, the 2nd and 79th Batteries Royal Field Artillery, and the 4th and 7th Battalions of Imperial Yeomanry—marched off towards the east over some miles of open country over which the tall grass, bleached now by many days of scorching sun, waved thickly round their knees. In the distance were three ominous hills—such hills as the Dutchmen delight in—fronted by a lower eminence which was occupied by the enemy. These espied the coming of the British, and promptly betook themselves to their main position on two of the hills, Biddulph's Berg and Tafel Berg. From these points of vantage they greeted the Kent and Derbyshire Yeomanry, who had advanced to reconnoitre, with a storm of bullets which at once laid low many a brave fellow. Still the Derbyshire Yeomanry pursued their way, worked round the hill and dismounted and proceeded to seek cover, where they were forced to remain till dark set in, unable to stir lest the volleys of the enemy should find them out. On the western side the Kent Yeomanry were hotly attacked, and many were wounded. Meanwhile, from the foremost hill, whence the Boers had spied out the coming of Rundle's force, the British now in possession, commenced to fire upon the heights of the Biddulph's Berg; the artillery too dropped shells in the direction of the enemy; and the sun went down on the hostile forces, fighting vigorously so long as a ray of daylight served to illumine the deadly operations. Then they bivouacked where they were. At dawn the battle was resumed,

## The Battle of Biddulph's Berg

and an effort was made to turn the enemy's right flank. The Grenadiers under Colonel Lloyd moved off to the west, supported by the Scots Guards, West Kent, and Imperial Yeomanry, marching over miles of hard dried grass till within range of the Boers' lair. But as usual the foe was invisible. It was imagined that he had vacated the position in the night; but to be on the safe side a cascade of shrapnel was poured over the steep. Even this brusque process of search was unavailing. Not a sign of life was visible, though wounded Dutchmen must have lain in their hiding-places with stoical calm. And now commenced the dangerous, the awe-striking feature of the day. The grass, dried to chip, suddenly burst into a blaze. The carelessness of some one had set it alight, and presently the gallant Grenadiers found themselves smothered with the heat of an oven and forced to move from their position. They were now ordered to face the Boer hiding-place and attack it, while the 79th Battery behind them prepared again to scour the hill. Then, following their usual tactics, the Boer guns burst forth with loud and startling uproar, surprising the troops, who had almost accepted the idea that the enemy had fled. There was no doubt that he was "all there," with two guns and a "pom-pom," and meant to make himself objectionable. Just as the Boer shell was dispersing the amazed Yeomanry (who but a few moments before had been preparing the pipe of peace in full security of the Dutchmen's supposed evacuation), the grass again broke into flame, growing and leaping by bounds, so that the best efforts to stay its progress were unavailing. Still, the artillery duel, once commenced, continued briskly, briskly as the veldt fire below, that, sweeping round the wounded as they fell, made a new and awful panorama in the sufficiently horrific scene of war. The British gunners worked their hardest to silence the Boer gun, and as they proceeded, the great furnace of roaring, crackling grass gathered and grew, and the volumes of smoke soon rendered the Boer position invisible. During this time not a sound of musketry had been heard, only the Boer gun had given tongue vociferously enough to tax all the energies of the British gunners to silence it. Then came the order for the Grenadiers to advance, and this, in spite of smoke and the violent efforts of the Boer artillery, they did in right soldierly fashion, making for the direction of the offensive weapon with splendid coolness and precision. But no sooner had they neared to within some hundred yards of the piece than they suddenly found themselves pelted at by the hitherto inactive rifles of the foe. Thick and fast buzzed the bullets of the Dutchmen, loud roared the guns as the shells burst and bellowed. One man after another dropped—was killed, maimed, mutilated—and there, invisible, lay as he fell, a prey in his helplessness to the devouring flames

## The Transvaal War

that were now leaping and crackling with an almost majestic vehemence, rushing far and wide, like some vast, ravening, raging demon, with a thousand fiery tongues panting forth volumes of blue-white breath over the whole universe. And within this fearful area the perpetual rattle and roll of musketry continued their fell work, while the wounded, red with their gore, and redder with the scorching of the flames, crept, and crawled and reeled to places of safety, or, woeful truth, writhed where they fell, victims to the most horrible torture that fiendish imagination has yet devised. Amid the stentorian rampage none could hear their cries for aid, none could see their struggles for release. Only now and then, when some succeeded in emerging from the fiery chaos, could the appalled few who were beyond the vivid halo of destruction realise the mighty horror that lay on the skirts of Biddulph's Hill. But the battle raged on. The Yeomanry, under Colonel Blair, were off in hot haste to attack and rout some Boers who were endeavouring to make a flank attack, while the artillery, despite the scene of carnage, battered the hills whence the Boers, safely hidden, were pouring a horrible fusillade upon the persevering, dauntless Grenadiers. These remained for hours returning the fire of the enemy, in a position of unparalleled peril, until the order came to retire. This movement was executed with splendid precision, but many were left upon the field, and in the succouring of them deeds of heroism followed each other with such rapidity that several glorious acts passed unwitnessed and unsung. Lieutenant Quilter, with twenty men, volunteered to rescue the helpless, and rushed into the flaming furnace without arms, and under the relentless fire of the enemy. One after another of the wretched sufferers were hauled off to safety by these gallant deliverers, who, in full consciousness of the grim fate that must have been theirs should they themselves have dropped, pursued their work with almost amazing heroism. Colonel Lloyd received many injuries, and was also much scorched, but continued to command his gallant Grenadiers till further wounds made him helpless. He might again have been wounded where he lay, but for the assistance of a young drummer (Harries), into whose hand a bullet passed while he was tending his commanding officer.

While the battle was proceeding, General Rundle received a communication from Lord Roberts ordering him to go to the assistance of General Brabant, who also was in difficulties. It became necessary, therefore, to effect the retirement. The manœuvre had, however, produced the desired effect, for the Boers had been somewhat hard hit, and had given up their aggressive operations, leaving the neighbourhood of Lindley open to our force. On Wednesday the 30th General Rundle was informed that De Villiers, the Boer Com-

## The Battle of Biddulph's Berg

mandant, was seriously wounded, and that fifty Dutchmen had been killed, and many injured, whereupon a doctor and champagne were sent to the late enemy; this in spite of the fact that very early in the proceedings of Monday the Boers had commenced the battle with their customary treacherous tricks. From an adjacent homestead they had flown a white flag, taking care that directly the scouts went forward to accept their surrender they should be pelted liberally as a reward for their confidence. As a result, one of the British party was wounded mortally, and another severely. Fortunately, the next day (Tuesday) the ruffians received their deserts, for the farmhouse was liberally pounded by the 2nd Battery of Artillery. Nor was this the sole barbaric act of the day. A West Kent Yeoman, while scouting, had passed a Dutch farmhouse, and was invited in to coffee, being assured by the Dutchwoman, who desired to play the hostess, that no Boers had been near the place for days. Happily the wary yeoman refused, for he had no sooner turned to ride off than he was pelted with bullets from a party of Boers who had immediately rushed from the homestead to fire at him. His marvellous escape was merely due to the nature of the ground round the farm, which afforded him cover.

Still General Rundle's sense of humanity overcame the instinct of reprisal; for after the battle he offered shelter to the Boer wounded, even promising to tend them without considering them prisoners of war.

In the engagement at Biddulph's Berg thirty of the British were killed and 150 wounded. Among the wounded officers were:—Grenadier Guards—Col. F. Lloyd, D.S.O., Capt. G. L. Bonham, Capt. C. E. Corkran, Lieut. E. Seymour, Lieut. A. Murray. Scots Guards—Major F. W. Romilly D.S.O. Royal Welsh Fusiliers—Captain R. S. Webber, A.D.C. to General Rundle.

On Thursday, May 31st, the troops proceeded to Ficksburg to the assistance of General Brabant, who had engaged the enemy near the Basuto Border on the Tuesday, and was still fighting.

In spite of General Rundle's desperate fight, the 13th Battalion (Irish) Imperial Yeomanry, on whose account the battle was undertaken, had a most disastrous encounter with an overwhelming number of Boers near Lindley on the 31st of May. This battalion, as we know, was attacked on the way from Kroonstad to Lindley, and temporarily helped by the operations near Senekal. Subsequently the party came upon a superior force of Boers, and was forced to surrender.

The *Cape Times* gave its version of the affair:—

"The story was told by Corporal Marks, who, with Trooper Brian, alone escaped capture. The force in question consisted of about 500 men, under the command of Colonel Spragge, and was comprised of the Duke of

## The Transvaal War

Cambridge's Own and the Irish and Belfast Yeomanry. The Duke's were 125 strong. With this force was a convoy of waggons, while the scouts, of whom our informant, Corporal Marks, was in command, numbered five.

"The little battalion left Kroonstad on May 25, under hurried orders to reinforce General Colville at Lindley without delay. On their way they captured and disarmed a troop of sixteen Boers whom they found in possession of a quantity of ammunition. Taking their prisoners with them, they hurried on at full speed, arriving at Lindley on Sunday, May 27, about noon. As they entered the town a number of horsemen were seen galloping out at the other end in the direction of Heilbron. Much to their disappointment our men found that General Colville had left at daylight that day, after some severe fighting, for Heilbron. . . .

"On Wednesday night, after the gallant little band had been fighting against enormous odds for three days, Colonel Spragge decided to send one scout (C. Smith), in company of a Kaffir guide, in search of General Rundle, who was supposed to be in the neighbourhood of Senekal, with an urgent message for help. Corporal Marks and Trooper Brian were instructed to leave at the same time with a similar message for General Colville. A close Boer line had been drawn round the position of the devoted garrison, and it was necessary to pierce the cordon to reach Heilbron. The scouts left unarmed, and after a terrible night of it, Marks and Brian got through the enemy's lines. The night was bitterly cold, and the Boers had lighted camp fires, which proved serviceable guides to the two men. They passed so close to the pickets that they could hear them talking and laughing perfectly distinctly. Taking a circuitous route, they kept the Heilbron road some distance on their right, and by rapid marching reached Colville's camp at seven o'clock on Thursday morning. The message was delivered to the General, whose reply was that he could do nothing. Unhappily, Smith and the Kaffir were captured by Boers, and Smith was shot on the spot.

"The following is a copy of the despatch given to Corporal Marks for delivery to Colonel Spragge :—

"Your message received 7 A.M. I am eighteen miles from Lindley and twenty-two from Heilbron, which latter place I hope to reach to-morrow. The enemy are between me and you, and I cannot send back supplies. If you cannot join me by road to Heilbron you must retire on Kroonstad, living on the country, and if necessary, abandoning your waggons.—(Signed) H. E. COLVILLE, Lieutenant-General."

"General Colville appears to have believed that the little force could make a dash for it and cut their way through to Kroonstad. In any case, he did not see his way to go to the help of the men who had been marching to reinforce himself. Knowing that this message could be of no possible service to Colonel Spragge, and realising the urgency of the case, Corporal Marks decided to take the responsibility of not wasting time by returning to deliver this message, and he and Brian made for Kroonstad as hard as their horses would gallop. About eight miles north-east of the town they learned that Lord Methuen was in the neighbourhood, and they reached his camp about half-past four that afternoon (Thursday). Lord Methuen immediately made preparations to relieve the plucky little force in such hard straits at Lindley, and started the same afternoon. He reached Lindley without opposition the same night. But it was too late."

## The Battle of Biddulph's Berg

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Another account said:—"The battalion, consisting of the Duke of Cambridge's Own and three companies of Irish Yeomanry—under 500 in all—reached Kroonstad on Friday morning, May 22, after a long forced march. A few hours after their arrival they received an urgent message from General Colville requiring them to join him without delay at Lindley, and they started at 8 p.m. that same evening with one day's rations, reaching Lindley, fifty miles distant, on the Sunday morning. When the advanced guard reached the town they found it apparently deserted, the only signs of British occupation being empty beef and biscuit tins; and were informed that General Colville had left at daybreak. Almost immediately they were fired at from behind walls and houses, and finding the place untenable retreated about a mile outside the town, where Colonel Spragge took up a good position on some kopjes, with a stream of water and good shelter for the horses and waggons. This place they defended, fighting by day and fortifying by night, till Thursday, at 2 P.M., on slender rations, though surrounded by greatly superior numbers. On Thursday morning the Boers were largely reinforced, and also brought up cannon—three Krupps and a 'pom-pom,'—when the shell-fire telling dreadfully at short range, Colonel Spragge felt it would be madness to hold out longer, and surrendered after losing more than seventy-eight in killed and wounded out of his small force—when all was over some of the unwounded were so exhausted that they could hardly march into Lindley, where their gallant enemies as well as the non-combatants gave them the highest credit for the stand they had made in an almost hopeless position. Next day Lord Methuen arrived after a splendid forced march, and the wounded were set free."

In regard to the loss of the Duke of Cambridge's Yeomanry, there was a good deal of criticism, and accounts dealing with the *raison d'être* of the disaster vary. Mr. Winston Churchill, in support of Sir H. Colville, declared that it was sent out with the absurdly inadequate escort by the fiat of a higher authority, with the full knowledge that Heilbron was surrounded by a force of Boers estimated at from 4000 to 5000 men. It was also despatched without warning, being sent, or at any rate received at Heilbron, so that it was impossible to operate from the latter place to assist its passage, especially as it was actually captured almost immediately after leaving Kroonstad, and fourteen miles from Heilbron.

"In the case of the Yeomanry, the message giving notice of the change of place, where it was to join the 9th Division from Ventersburg to Lindley, was by error addressed to the 9th Brigade, and this was not received by Sir H. Colville till the 21st of June. The first intimation of their position was given by a messenger to General Colville's camp when twenty miles out of Lindley from the Yeomanry, then five miles on the other side on the Kroonstad road. The messenger asked for reinforcement and supplies, but did not represent the situation as very serious, as, in fact, at that time it was not. But at this juncture General Colville was surrounded by a large force of Boers on his flank and rear, and short of supplies himself, and on a time

## The Transvaal War

march under orders to reach Heilbron on the 29th. He therefore advised Colonel Spragge to retire on the Kroonstad road, and authorised him, if necessary, to abandon his baggage, &c."

Lord Methuen, who at the time was on the march to Kroonstad, was ordered off, as we already know, to the rescue. Within half-an-hour he had started, and by 10 A.M. on the 2nd of June he had accomplished forty-four miles in twenty-five hours. But his expedition was of no avail, for Spragge's Irishmen had been taken prisoners. Nevertheless having arrived, Lord Methuen proceeded to attack the Boers with vigour, and after five hours' continuous fighting, put some 3000 of them to flight.

The official list of prisoners of war showed 22 officers and 863 non-commissioned officers and men.

Among the officers were the following :—

13th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry—Lieutenant-Colonel Spragge, Lieutenant-Colonel Holland, Captain Robinson, Captain Humby, Lieutenant Mitchell, Lieutenant Stannus, Lieutenant the Earl of Leitrim, Lieutenant Rutledge, Lieutenant Montgomery, Lieutenant Lane, Lieutenant Du Pré, Lieutenant Donnelly, Sergeant Wright, Sergeant Woodhouse. Captain Keith had been killed in the affair of the 29th, when Captain Sir J. Power was dangerously wounded, and Captain the Earl of Longford, Lieutenants Stuart, Robin, and Benson, were wounded together with Lieutenant Bertram of the Eastern Province Horse (since dead).

The following officers were also wounded on June 1 and 2 :—

3rd Battalion Imperial Yeomanry—Captain L. R. Rolleston, Captain M. S. Dawsany, Lieutenant L. E. Starkey.

Soon after this time the 9th Division was split up, owing to the necessity of detaching small forces. Generals Smith-Dorrien and Bruce-Hamilton joined their forces with that of General Ian Hamilton, while General MacDonald with the Highland Brigade acted as an independent force, and General Sir H. Colville returned to England.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While dealing with the matter it is due to General Colville to repeat the statement made by himself at the end of the year to a representative of Reuter's Agency :—

"I am accused of being chiefly responsible for the surrender of the Yeomanry at Lindley. In my opinion the primary cause of this surrender was the insufficient information given by the headquarters staff to Colonel Spragge and myself. Had I been informed of Lord Roberts's intentions and of the intended movements of Colonel Spragge, who was in command of the Yeomanry, and had Colonel Spragge been made acquainted with the orders I received from Lord Roberts, this disaster would never have happened. The following details will make it clear that the loss of the Yeomanry was primarily due to bad staff work. On May 20 I received a telegram from the chief of the staff ordering me to concentrate my troops, consisting of the Highland Brigade, the Eastern Province Horse, a field battery, and two naval guns, at Ventersburg on May 23, to leave that town on the 24th and to march to Heilbron, *via* Lindley, arriving at Lindley on May 26, and at Heilbron on the 29th. I was informed that I should be joined at Ventersburg by the 13th Imperial Yeomanry and Lovat's Scouts.

"On arrival at Ventersburg, finding that neither the Yeomanry nor the Scouts were there, I informed the chief of the staff by telegraph, but received no answer from him at the time, though his reply was handed to me more than a month later, among a bundle of undelivered telegrams. This telegram was worded as follows: 'May 24. Yeomanry are so late they



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THEIR ORDEAL OF FIRE: THE GRENADIER GUARDS AT THE BATTLE OF BIDDULPH'S BERG

Drawing by R. Caton Woodville





## Fighting on the Western Border

### FIGHTING ON THE WESTERN BORDER

Meanwhile Sir Charles Warren's troops, moving from Faberspruit, some twelve miles from Douglas, had a nasty experience. The force consisted of some four hundred Duke of Edinburgh's Volunteers, one and a half companies of the 8th Regiment of Imperial Yeomanry, some of Paget's Horse, twenty-five of Warren's Scouts, and some guns of the Royal Canadian Artillery. During

cannot catch you at Ventersburg. You must march without them. They will join you later *via* Kroonstad.' As I did not receive the telegram till the march was over it did not affect my action, but had I received it at the time its wording would have led me to suppose that the Yeomanry would join me at Heilbron, as was actually the case with Lovat's Scouts. At this time Lord Roberts's army was disposed roughly as follows: General Hunter's Division on the Kimberley-Mafeking Railway, Lord Methuen on the Vaal River, headquarters and General Pole-Carew's Division on the Bloemfontein-Johannesburg Railway, General Ian Hamilton's column at Heilbron, and General Rundle and Brabant to the south-east of me. It was, therefore, extended across the Free State, and I assumed that Lord Roberts intended to advance in this formation, sweeping all before him till he got within striking distance of the Vaal, thus forcing the enemy to extend, and that he would then select one point for forcing the passage of the river. I also supposed that Heilbron, which is the head of a short line of railway, would be the supply depot for the columns to the east, as Winburg had been.

"My very definite orders, and the fact that I was not to move till the last possible moment, which necessitated my averaging seventeen miles a day, strengthened the assumption that I was taking part in a combined movement, in which great exactitude in conforming to the time table is, of course, of the utmost importance. In a telegram which Lord Roberts had sent to General Hamilton a short time before on a similar occasion he had impressed on him the importance of columns arriving simultaneously. As I had been officially informed that General Hamilton was in occupation of Heilbron, I assumed that my orders to be there on the 29th indicated that that was the day on which he would be required to take part in the general advance, and that any delay on my part would either retard the advance and upset the Commander-in-Chief's calculations, or that by leaving Heilbron unoccupied I should hand over an important supply depot to the enemy. I have thus explained why in no circumstances should I have felt myself justified in disobeying Lord Roberts's orders, which I simply carried out from first to last. I now proceed to recite the circumstances in which I became acquainted with Colonel Spragge's difficulties, and the action I took.

"I left Ventersburg on May 24 as ordered, and on the 26th, after a fight outside Lindley, entered it, finding that the place had been vacated by us, a fact of which no notification had been given me, though I had been informed of our occupation of it. Marching at daylight on the following morning we crossed the Rhenoster River just before sunset, having been engaged the greater part of the day, and on the morning of the 28th I received the following message: 'Colonel Spragge to General Colville. Found no one in Lindley but Boers. Have five hundred men, but only one day's food. Have stopped three miles back on Kroonstad road. I want help to get out without great loss.—B. Spragge, Lieutenant-Colonel, May 27, 1900.' I asked the orderly who Colonel Spragge was, and on hearing from him that he was the officer commanding the Yeomanry I learned for the first time that these troops were following me. The statement, which I have seen several times repeated in the papers, that I had urged the Yeomanry to hurry after me, is absolutely untrue. I have reason to believe that this baseless newspaper report has obtained credence in some high official quarters. I have already expressed my views of the necessity of being at Heilbron at the time ordered, and as it is a recognised rule of war that the lesser must be sacrificed to the greater interest, I should in any circumstances have considered it my duty to push on even had I been sure that such action would have entailed the loss of the Yeomanry. But in this case I had two additional reasons for doing so. First, that, as Colonel Spragge had succeeded in retiring three miles on the Kroonstad road I was convinced that he would have no difficulty in making good his retreat, though possibly with loss, as the colonel himself had said; secondly, that I had then only two days' more food for my force, and had I fought my way back I should not only have reduced the Highland Brigade to the verge of starvation, but should certainly have had insufficient supplies to take me back to Heilbron."

## The Transvaal War

the night, a particularly dark one, the Boers slunk up in two parties to the gardens of farmhouses near which the yeomanry on the one hand, and Sir C. Warren's and the Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers on the other, were quartered. In the dusk before dawn, these suddenly blazed out on the British, who, like lightning, got under arms. But in the shock and uproar of the first alarm the English horses that had been kraaled burst through the kraal walls and stampeded, thus making the scene of turmoil more intense. With the first streak of daylight the whole British force poured shot and shell into the gardens where the Boers had hidden themselves, and for a good hour the troops were at work driving the invaders from the neighbourhood of the camps. The Boers lost heavily, and a portion of the Yeomanry suffered correspondingly while pressing forward to the support of the pickets. Many of Paget's Horse were wounded, notably Lieutenant Lethbridge, whose injury was dangerous, and of the Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers three were killed and four wounded. Their gallant Colonel—Colonel Spence—was shot dead while in act of giving orders. Major Kelly, A.D.C. to Sir Charles Warren, was wounded; Lieutenant Patton, A.D.C., was shot in the knee, and Lieutenant Huntingdon was slightly injured. Many Boers were wounded and thirteen were killed, but others contrived to gallop off scot free, as owing to the stampeding of the horses it was impossible to follow them up. The total British casualties were eighteen killed and about thirty wounded. The result of the engagement had a decidedly beneficial effect upon the rebels, who were at that time hesitating on which side of the fence to locate themselves.

Colonel Adye had also surprised the enemy and gained a victory at Kheis on the 27th—a victory which had the effect of defeating the plans of the rebels who had assembled within some twenty miles of that place in hope to effect a junction with others of their kind. The action was a smart one, and many hundred head of stock and prisoners were captured, but it was also costly, as Major J. A. Orr-Ewing, 5th Co. Imperial Yeomanry, was killed; Captain L. H. Jones, 32 Co. Imperial Yeomanry; Surg.-Capt. Dun, 5th Co.; Lieut. Venables, Nesbitt's Horse, were wounded; and two gallant young officers, Captain Tindall, 1st Welsh Regiment, and Lieutenant Matthews, 2nd Gloucester Regiment, both succumbed to the severe injuries they had received.

Sir Charles Warren, after his engagement, marched without opposition from Faberspruit to Campbell, which was reached on the 5th of June.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### GENERAL BULLER'S ADVANCE TO NEWCASTLE

THE relief of Ladysmith caused the Boers to fall back towards the Drakensberg, and Sir Redvers Buller, whose troops were thoroughly exhausted, encamped his army to north and west of the dilapidated town, and there remained stationary for several weeks. It was necessary that the force should thoroughly recuperate and get into working order in time to co-operate with the great central advance when Lord Roberts should give the word. There was an immense amount to be done. The mounted troops, many of them, needed to be remounted, and winter clothing was required. The reconstruction of the transport also demanded alteration, while it was necessary, in conjunction with Lord Roberts's operations, to keep a wary eye on the Boers and prevent them from crossing into the Free State and swelling the enemy's forces opposing the great advance.

As with the departure of Sir Charles Warren to the western frontier, some slight changes had taken place in the Natal Field Force, it becomes necessary to inspect a rough table of the divisions at this time under Sir Redvers Buller :—

### NATAL

#### GENERAL SIR REDVERS BULLER.

##### SECOND DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir C. F. CLERY.  
 2nd Brigade (Major-General Hamilton).  
 2nd East Surrey.  
 2nd West Yorks.  
 2nd Devons.  
 2nd West Surrey.  
 4th Brigade (Colonel C. D. Cooper).  
 1st Rifle Brigade.  
 1st Durham Light Infantry.  
 3rd King's Royal Rifles.  
 2nd Scottish Rifles (Cameronians).  
 7th, 14th, and 66th Field Batteries.

##### FOURTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General LYTTELTON.  
 7th Brigade  
 (Brigadier-General F. W. Kitchener).  
 1st Devon.  
 1st Gloucester.

1st Manchester.  
 2nd Gordon Highlanders.

8th Brigade (Major-General F. Howard).  
 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers.  
 1st Leicester.  
 1st King's Royal Rifles.  
 2nd King's Royal Rifles.

Two Brigade Divisions Royal Artillery.  
 13th, 67th, 69th Field Batteries.  
 21st, 42nd, 53rd Field Batteries.

##### FIFTH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General H. J. T. HILDYARD.  
 10th Brigade (Major-General J. T. Coke).  
 2nd Dorset.  
 2nd Middlesex.  
 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

# The Transvaal War

1<sup>st</sup> Brigade (Major-General A. S. Wynne).

2nd Royal Lancaster.  
2nd Lancashire Fusiliers.  
1st South Lancashire.  
1st York and Lancaster.  
19th, 28th, and 78th Field Batteries.

## Corps Troops.

2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers.  
2nd Rifle Brigade.  
1st King's Liverpool.  
Imperial Light Infantry.  
61st Field Battery (Howitzers).  
Two Nordenfelts (taken from the Boers).  
Natal Battery 9-pounders.  
Fourteen naval 12-pounder quick-firers.  
4th Mountain Battery.  
10th Mountain Battery, two guns.  
Four 4.7 naval guns.  
Naval 6-in. gun.  
Part of Siege Train.

## CAVALRY DIVISION.

1st Brigade  
(Major-General J. F. Burn Murdoch).

2nd Brigade

(Major-General J. F. Brocklehurst).

3rd Brigade

(Major-General the Earl of Dundonald).

5th Dragoon Guards.  
1st Royal Dragoons.  
5th Lancers.  
13th Hussars.  
18th Hussars.  
19th Hussars.  
A Battery Royal Horse Artillery.  
South African Light Horse.  
Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry.  
Bethune's Mounted Infantry.  
Natal Carabineers.  
Natal Mounted Rifles.  
Border Mounted Rifles.  
Umvoti Mounted Rifles.  
Natal Police.  
Colt Battery.

## ZULULAND.

Addison's Colonial Scouts.

For some weeks it appeared as though no move were contemplated; but on the 7th of May the machinery began to revolve. General Clery's Division proceeded from Ladysmith to Modder Spruit, while Lord Dundonald and General Dartnell also prepared to move their troops out of camp at Bug's Farm. Lord Roberts at this time had reached a point in the Free State level with Ladysmith, and Sir Redvers Buller thus became included in the scheme of advance, and was able to act in conjunction with him. The Boers, numbering some 7000 or 8000, were swarming on the Biggarsberg range, having prepared entrenchments on all points commanding the road from Ladysmith to the Transvaal and as far as Helpmakaar. They knew well by experience, however, the discomforts attendant on their position, for their only clear way of escape was by Laing's Nek—the passes over the Drakensberg on the west, and Zululand on the east being now closed to them.

On the 11th of May activities began. Dundonald's Cavalry Brigade and Clery's Infantry Division were assembled in the neighbourhood of Sunday River Drift south of Elandslaagte. The General's plan was to post his left at Elandslaagte and swing his right flank round by Helpmakaar and crumple the Boers up towards Dundee.

On the 12th Sir Redvers Buller, with the right column, moved towards Helpmakaar, following the same route as that taken by General Yule in his famous retreat from Glencoe, while General Hildyard (the central column) made a demonstration by crossing Sunday River, near the railway line, and Lyttelton's Division (the

## General Buller's Advance to Newcastle

left column) prolonged the line farther west. Meanwhile, the brigades of Clery and Dundonald—over ruts and obstacles, mere apologies for roads—had reached Waschbank, and were facing the frowning heights of the Biggarsberg, which loomed large and ominous and threatening about fifteen miles in the distance.

The Biggarsberg region, now so pregnant with historical interest is so called after one of the early pioneers of Durban, an Englishman, named Edward Biggar, who in 1838 fought side by side with the Boers against Dingaan. Of the great range in those days a Natalian writer said: "Besides being the first eastern plateau terrace of the Drakensberg, musically termed 'Quathlamba' by the natives residing in it, it consists of two long lines of elevation, divided by great ravines abounding in romantic cascades, dizzy precipices, and great pointed peaks towering towards the heavens in fantastic forms, veritable mountain forts,—

'Which like the giants stand  
To sentinel enchanted land.'

Majestic krantzes were round us bristling in great tree ferns, huge aloes, and African Euphoboebia, the latter's bright scarlet blossoms contrasting sharply with the dark green foliage, nursing the base of isolated lofty hills, whose sunless pillars were hidden in earth's depths, unknown to human search."

This picturesque range runs across North Natal south-east towards the junction of the Tugela (the "Angry" River of the Kaffirs) and the Mooi River, and some of the peaks tower above the land of Natal 5000 to over 7000 feet; and from these, on a clear day, may be traced the whole crimson history of Buller's relief of Ladysmith. In the present onward march great precautions had to be taken, as this—a comparatively short cut to save a round of some thirty miles—was teeming with the enemy, whose flank on the Biggarsberg it was the chief's design to turn. The march was resumed the whole day under menace of the enemy, who hovered, vulture-like, in the distant heights, and towards afternoon came into the plains, attacking and wounding some of the British patrols. They also succeeded in taking prisoners three of the South African Light Horse, Australians lately joined, who, mistaking the enemy in their kharki disguise for friends, walked unsuspectingly into their arms. By nightfall the troops were encamped at Vermaak's Farm, with the Boers and their guns not very far distant.

Sunday's proceedings were opened in the haze of the morning with a shell from the hostile band, and after a time the naval guns woke up, spat forth some four times, and reduced the Dutchmen to silence. The Mounted Brigades, with a battery of Royal Horse Artillery, had moved on beforehand, and by the time the passage at

## The Transvaal War

arms between the big guns was in full swing, they and the transport were safely in a place of shelter. The Mounted Infantry and the 2nd Brigade, under General Hamilton, then engaged in the herculean task of getting up the rugged steepes of the Biggarsberg, and there, securing a neck which was the key to the summit, prevented the enemy from attempting to waylay the advancing army. On the ridges taken by General Hamilton were formidable trenches prepared for defence, which could now serve the foe no longer.

While this flanking process was taking place, Colonel Bethune, with his composite force of Mounted Infantry, was co-operating in the direction of Helpmakaar, thus threatening the Boers' left flank, and rendering their position at Helpmakaar distinctly uncomfortable. The guns on both sides worked furiously—those of the Boers with poor success; and at dusk, when the troops bivouacked, there was reason to hope that by morning the region of Helpmakaar would be purged of the enemy. And so it proved,

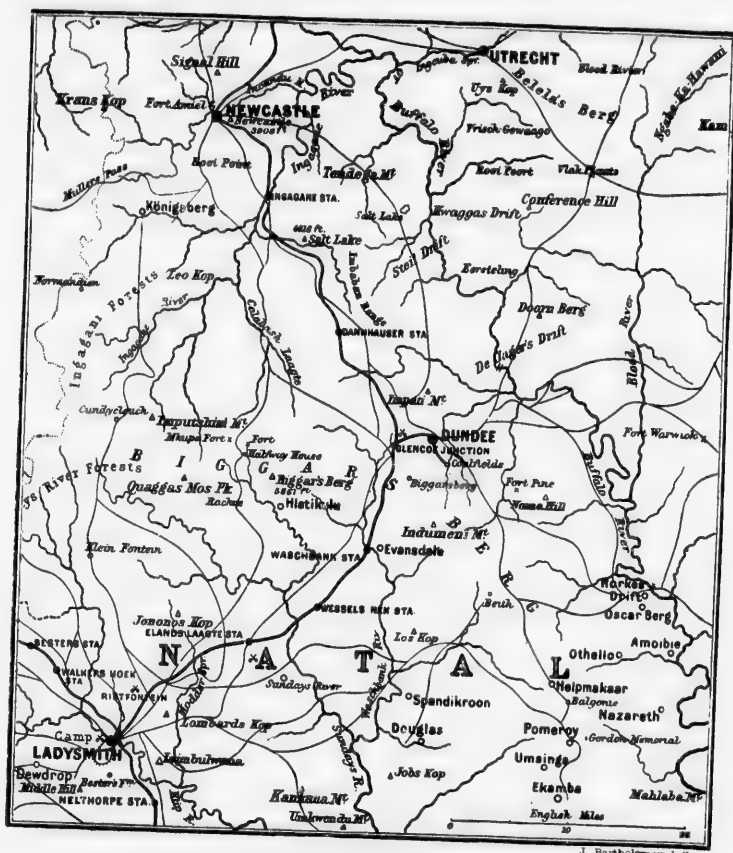
With the dawn of day it was discovered that the Dutchmen were in full retreat towards Dundee, pursued by the cavalry. But the enemy were covered in their retreat by some 1500 Boers, whose tactics were excellent. Each section as it fell back set fire to the grass, thus drawing a veil of smoke between them and Dundonald's men, and intercepting the rush of the pursuers, who more than once were almost within a lance-length of them. They succeeded in getting clear away, in spite of the magnificent dash of the pursuit, which covered some forty miles. Then, having secured some kops, they made sufficient stand to check our advance through the rippling sea of flame made by the veldt fires, while their main body vanished, leaving open the road to Dundee.

The Boers, finding themselves outflanked, decided to make no stand, either at Dundee or Glencoe, and both these places, of now historical interest, were occupied in the course of the 15th, and the 16th was spent in resting after the fatigues of the preceding days. Dundee was a sad and deserted-looking place. Though the coal-mines were untouched, its houses were denuded of furniture, and bore evidences of Boer occupation and Boer mischief. Wall papers hung in shreds, doors were unhinged and broken, windows were merely gaps, and the word dilapidation was marked everywhere. The inhabitants, such few as remained, gave the troops a cordial welcome.

On Thursday the 17th the force was again up and doing, the earliest birds being the Mounted Infantry. They journeyed along towards Dannhauser Station, midway between Dundee and Newcastle. On the afternoon of the 18th the troops swarmed into the pleasing green-girt town of Newcastle, after a long and fatiguing

## General Buller's Advance to Newcastle

march along a fire-blackened plain, devilishly prepared by the departing Boers for the purpose of showing up the advance of the kharkiclad legions. Joy and welcome was writ on every face, and hearty cheers greeted the arrival of the army. Sir Redvers Buller was



GENERAL BULLER'S ADVANCE TO NEWCASTLE.

presented with a banner which had been secretly worked by the ladies of the locality in anticipation of his coming. The town they found had been rechristened Viljoensdorp by the Boers, whose



## The Transvaal War

labours there had also been anticipatory. They had destroyed the large water-tanks for supplying the engines at Glencoe, Dannhauser, and Newcastle, but the inconveniences were merely temporary, and repairs were actively set on foot. Report came in that the Dutchmen were full of activity, swarming in the direction of the famous Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill, therefore on the afternoon of Saturday the 19th, Lord Dundonald, with naval guns, went ahead to unearth them. They, however, remained buried wherever they were, and the desperately-fatigued men and horses of the Mounted Brigades returned towards Ingogo Station, while some of the troops encamped on the battlefield. But their fatigues or its grievous memories scarcely damped their spirits, for they were on the confines of the Transvaal, and Pretoria, the land of promise, seemed near at hand.

Sir Redvers Buller forthwith issued the following proclamation :—

"The troops of Queen Victoria are now passing through the Transvaal. Her Majesty does not make war on individuals, but is, on the contrary, anxious to spare them, as far as may be possible, the horrors of war. The quarrel England has is with the Government and not with the people of the Transvaal. Provided they remain neutral no attempt will be made to interfere with persons living near the line of march, every possible protection will be given them, and any of their property that it may be necessary to take will be paid for. But, on the other hand, those who are thus allowed to remain near the line of march must respect and maintain their neutrality, and residents of any locality will be held responsible both in persons and property if any damage is done to the railway or telegraph, or if any violence is done to any member of the British forces in the vicinity of their homes."

On this, many Natal Dutch gave themselves up and others were captured, but it was again observed that those farmers who tendered their submission tendered with it, not Mausers, but other weapons of more ancient pattern.

Affairs at this time were going on most satisfactorily, the troops, after a 120-mile march, accomplished in nine days, including a day's halt and two days' fighting, had almost cleared Natal of the invaders, and were in possession of the country from Van Reenan's Pass to the Buffalo River. A message of congratulation on their efforts was received from the Queen, and the General expressed his satisfaction at the successful work accomplished. One unfortunate affair damped the spirits of the advancing army.

On the 17th, Colonel Bethune was detached, with about 500 men, from Dundee. His column consisted of five squadrons of mounted infantry, two Hotchkiss and two Maxim guns. His instructions were to show his force in N'qutu, in the centre of British Zululand (to which a magistrate and civil establishment were about to return), and afterwards to rejoin Sir Redvers

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**GENERAL BULLER'S ADVANCE: PURSUING THE BOERS AFTER THE FIGHT ON HELPMAKAAR HEIGHTS**

Drawing by J. Nash, R.L., from a Sketch by G. Foucar

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## General Buller's Advance to Newcastle

Buller at Newcastle. The orders were executed, and Colonel Bethune moved towards Newcastle on the 20th May, *via* Vryheid, due north of the road which leads to Utrecht. About six miles north-west of Vryheid, the Boers were ambushed in the thick shrub that abounds in the neighbourhood, with the result that E squadron of Mounted Infantry, which had pushed ahead to reach Vryheid before dark set in, suffered severe loss. Few escaped to tell the tale, the outline of which was as follows: The Boers no sooner saw the troopers approaching than they jumped from their hiding-place and surrounded them. Captain Goff (6th Dragoon Guards), who was commanding the squadron, dismounted his men and made a valiant stand, but the Boers poured a volley on them, incapacitating most of the horses and many of the men. The commanding officer was shot dead. Still the party continued to reply to the fire of the enemy till, ammunition running short, they knew resistance would soon be unavailing. Meanwhile, the scene of confusion was horrible. The Boers had set the crisp, dry grass into a blaze, and behind the smoke of it were able to fire with impunity at the helpless British force. The rest of the column had hastened towards the scene of the disaster, but what with the crackling glare of the flamboyant grass, the suffocating clouds of smoke, and the deceptive darkness of the gloaming, Colonel Bethune dared not open fire at close quarters lest he should injure his own already wounded force. Gallantly the men of D squadron dashed into the mêlée, and rescued from thence such troopers as survived. Lieutenant Capell, who gave his horse to an injured trooper, was taken prisoner, and Lord De la Warr, while going to the relief of another, was slightly injured in the leg.

He afterwards gave to a correspondent of the *Central News* an interesting narrative of his experiences on that eventful day. He was acting as aide-de-camp to Colonel Bethune, and was directed to take messages to the captains of E and D squadrons, in the thickest of the fight. His instructions were to order them to retire, but when he came upon the scene he found that E squadron was already practically surrounded. He was able, however, to deliver his order to Captain Ford of D squadron, and then set out to return to Colonel Bethune through a heavy fire. In galloping back he saw Trooper Cooper, of Durban, lying wounded in the grass, which was then blazing. The flames were gradually making their way towards the wounded man, who was unable to move. A horrible death in a few minutes was certain, unless succour could be rendered him. Earl De la Warr instantly dismounted, crept up through the smoke, and was in the act of rescuing the man when he was pounced upon by about twenty Boers, who fired at him at close range. He was wounded, though not severely, and just managed to drag himself

## The Transvaal War

away from the burning grass. His horse had bolted, and he was only rescued when he had practically given up all hope.

The following casualties among officers occurred: Killed—3rd Dragoon Guards, Captain W. E. D. Goff; Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Lieutenant H. W. Lanham and Lieutenant W. McLachlan. Wounded—Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Captain Earl De la Warr and Lieutenant De Lasalle. Missing—Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Lieutenant A. E. Capell.

The whole of the wounded were taken by the enemy, and Colonel Bethune had no resource but to retire on N'qutu.

The Boers were falling back from Natal, and the British at this date were in possession of Christiana, Kroonstad, Lindley, and Newcastle. Thus, it will be seen, we were sweeping up, like an incoming tide, from all quarters. Sir Redvers Buller now halted to concentrate his army, collect supplies, and repair the rail, in order that his next move should be both rapid and effective. That being the case, his programme for the celebration of the Queen's Birthday took an unique form. The General decided that the men should spend "a record day" in repairing the rail. This they did with a will, as, indeed, they did all things at the behest of their much-respected chief. Repairs on all sides were prosecuted with ardour, the railway engineering staff working away at bridging operations on the Ingagane River at Waschbank, till, by the 28th, the line was clear to Newcastle. To clear the right flank Generals Hildyard and Lyttelton had been directed to Utrecht and Vryheid respectively, and the month closed with the entry into Utrecht, the first Transvaal town to be taken by the Natal Field Force. In the skirmishing which occurred, Captain St. John and Lieutenant Pearce had their horses shot under them, and Lieutenant Thompson had the misfortune to be wounded and taken prisoner. The town, however, was not really occupied till some weeks later.

Their part of the strategical programme accomplished, General Hildyard's Division left for Ingogo, while that of General Lyttelton marched to Coetze's Drift, due east of Ingogo, for the purpose of clearing the country between Vryheid and Wakkerstroom.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE INTERREGNUM AT PRETORIA

WHILE tremendous excitement was convulsing Johannesburg, Pretoria was simmering. The populace was trekking away towards the Lydenburg Mountains, their ox-carts rumbling incessantly along the streets, while a stream of Dutchmen, motley of habit and of mien, moved out before the rumour of the advancing army. They had decided that, though they might no longer be able to resist, they could still retain the ability to annoy! Mr. Kruger, with his Executive, amid the lamentations of his admirers, also fled. He hurried to the Middleburg Railway, leaving behind him a committee of citizens who were deputed to surrender the town to the British. He fled not empty-handed. In the dead of night gold in bars was piled recklessly into whatever vehicles could be found to hold it, and the spoil was shipped on board the train which bore the President from the scene of his really amazing career. With him went a good many of the British prisoners, though many more stoutly resisted the order for removal and showed fight. Their attitude betokened a general uproar, the story of which may be gleaned from the accounts of various officers who lived through days of tension which, coming atop of a long experience of incarceration, seemed to them like some hideous nightmare of the senses.

An officer, who had been captured by the Boers while in the hospital at Dundee after the retreat of General Yule, described the circumstances connected with the threatened commotion:—

"We were all at dinner, when Wood, of Standard Bank, and Hay, the American Consul, came in with two Hollanders. Their object in coming was to get us to send officers to the 5000 odd men out at Waterval, who were threatening to break out. It transpired that Kruger and the Government were 'clearing' (the report said in ambulance carts). The town was in a state of chaos, looting and drinking, and the British were expected next morning. The commandant—a Hollander, and not a bad chap in spite of it—then came in and announced that the British scouts were within six miles of Pretoria, and that he expected them in on the following morning. He appealed to us as soldiers, and asked us not to make it difficult for him to carry out his duty till the end. Well, we were

## The Transvaal War

in such good spirits that we gave him three cheers. Then Colonel H—— got up and called for three cheers for Wood and Hay, who have done so much for our men at Waterval. If it had not been for these two, and for subscriptions in the town and from us, the men would have been absolutely neglected. For though the Boer authorities took all the credit for what was done, they did nothing, discouraging all efforts, and treating with suspicion any one who stirred in the matter. At one time the hospital almost broke down for want of funds. Well, we gave them a tremendous ovation, and then sang 'For he's a jolly good fellow' over and over again. Then we struck up 'God save the Queen.' You never heard it sung as it was! It had been forbidden for nearly eight months. For the first Sunday when it was sung they took away the organ, and made themselves objectionable in many small ways. We had only once before sung it—on the Queen's birthday. . . .

"About twenty-five officers went off after dinner to keep the men in order. Waterval is about ten miles from here. If this step had had not been taken there is no saying what might have happened. The men had heard the booming of guns all day, in the direction of Johannesburg, and it is not to be wondered at that when the Boers tried to move them they flatly refused to budge. There are Maxims at each corner, and the loss of life would have been very great. But the Boers gave in. What might have happened if the men got loose in the town, after so much privation and such hardships, can be imagined, but the sending of officers should alter all things."

Naturally, at this time, the officers, who were prisoners, were bursting with excitement. On the 3rd, guns, about ten or twelve miles to south and south-west, were heard, and on the 4th, early, shells from British guns crashed on the ridge of hills south of the town—the first shots being fired at a redoubt behind the Artillery Barracks in Pretoria. Soon, to their delight, this was cleared of Boers, and subsequently two big forts on either side of the gorge in which is the railway then received attention. Three lyddite shells from the howitzer batteries were placed in the western fort, and a fierce and continuous fire from the 4.7 naval gun was concentrated on the railway station, and though the place remained intact the moral effect of the attack was sufficient to clear the course. Before dusk, more lyddite and shrapnel were concentrated on the huge hill south of Pretoria, and on part of the main ridge which had been shelled all day. The prisoners, acutely listening in their "bird cage," fancied they heard in the distance a British cheer, and confidently went to rest calculating on the morrow's freedom. At 1 A.M., however, they were awakened. The commandant declared that he had received orders from Botha,

## The Interregnum at Pretoria

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and they must at once pack and trek outside the town—as the town was to be defended, and was therefore unsafe. Waggons were prepared to receive the kit; and the guard, usually numbering about forty-eight, had been more than doubled; and over one hundred armed Boers and Hollanders were waiting to escort 125 defenceless officers.

Colonel Hunt, Royal Artillery, the senior prisoner, was consulted. It was known that once moved, chance of release would be uncertain; and the colonel with his brother officers decided to adopt a policy of passive resistance. They parleyed; they argued the impossibility of removal at so short notice. They demanded what mounts were provided. The commandant declared they must walk. This the officers refused to do. Colonels never walked, they said. Cavalry and field officers must be provided with horses to ride. And again in the matter of food—how about that? Thus arguing, the commandant was detained about an hour and a half; but still he declared he had come to do a duty, and do it he must. The policy of passive resistance having run to its extreme limits, the colonels decided to place the commandant under arrest—to detain him in the building and trust to luck. The assistant-commandant, who arrived to "put in his oar," was promptly "bagged" also. At 2.45 A.M. more wrangling took place. The commandant was reminded that an agreement had been practically entered into with the Transvaal Government that the men at Waterval should be kept quiet on condition that they were not moved, and that the Transvaal Government could not move the prisoners without a breach of faith. The commandant seemed impressed, and offered his word of honour that if released he would telephone to say there could be no removal—and countermand waggons and cancel arrangements. His word of honour was accepted. The commandant retired from the prison, and the officers went to bed fearing the worst.

The remainder of the story is soon told. At 9 A.M. the Duke of Marlborough, accompanied by his irrepressible kinsman, Winston Churchill, galloped to the prison and told the prisoners they were free. The prisoners cheered and shouted themselves hoarse. The guard was disarmed without a murmur, and the prisoners' servants placed to do duty in their stead, an arrangement which afforded them much merriment and infinite satisfaction. The whole situation was the result of a most successful piece of bluff, and the officers were not a little gratified with the exercise of diplomacy which had brought about delay at a most critical moment. They had been unable, however, to prevent the departure, on the 4th, of some 1000 prisoners, which removal was a distinct breach of faith, considering the negotiations before alluded to.



## The Transvaal War

An officer related his experiences on the momentous 4th and 5th of June:—

"On Monday morning, 9 A.M., guns were heard quite close. We knew the Boers, 15,000 strong, had taken up a position about six miles out, and it was said they had solemnly sworn to die or win. About 10 A.M. we saw a shell burst over the hill to the south close to one of the forts. Then shrapnel after shrapnel was landed just over the fort and all along the crest line, about four miles away from us. Then some larger gun placed a lyddite close to the big fort, sending up an enormous column of red dust and making a huge report. It was a grand sight. It went on all day, and we sat there in deck chairs watching. We could see very few Boers about. About 3 P.M. we saw the balloon, about fifteen miles off, I should think. Later in the afternoon the railway was shelled near the suburbs, and just before dark, away to the west, we saw clouds of dust and what we took to be fleeing commandos. After such a day we all went to bed in excellent spirits. Our long depressing wait was very near its end, and we should now escape the terrible prospect of being moved away to the east. About 1 A.M. we were wakened up by the commandant, who turned on the electric light and walked along the line of beds, saying, 'Pack up, gentlemen, you have got to start at 3 P.M. and march six miles.' 'Why?' 'I don't know why; those are my orders.' 'Which direction?' 'To the railway, to the east.' Well, I knew what that meant at once, for I had expected the move for the last month, and many a very depressed hour had I spent thinking of the possibility of being carted about for six months in the cold—no food—no news—and every chance of being shot down. I lay in bed thinking what I should do—what we ought all to do. Some got up at once and dressed, quite ready to move, saying they were only going to move us out of range of the firing. But Colonel H—— luckily was not of that opinion, and nearly every one felt what it meant. We knew nothing for certain, but we thought our people were only six miles off. Outside the Hollanders' guard had been trebled—about 200—and there were about twenty armed and mounted Boers. It was soon agreed that no one should move unless a rifle was pointed at his head. The Hollanders are only half-hearted, and the Boers don't act without leaders. So the commandant and sub-commandant, who were alone inside, and only armed with revolvers, were made prisoners. They were told we refused to move; that they would have to shoot; and that, if they did shoot, every one of them would be hung by Bobs, who, we knew, was only seven miles off. Well, the commandant was talked round and fairly bluffed. He undertook not to move us, and to become a prisoner of the Boers if they insisted. He went out and had a talk with the Boer commandant;

## The Interregnum at Pretoria

they had words, and the Boers galloped off to the town, calling him a — Hollander, and saying they would have to get a Maxim. We had delayed the thing anyway for a time, and the railway might be cut any time by French. It was frightfully cold; I did not turn in again. Many went and hid in the roof, in ditches, and all sorts of places, where they were bound to be found. I got a bread-knife and cut a hole in the rabbit wire, which is only a small part of the obstacle, and asked the Hollander sentry to look the other way if I tried to get out when the commander came. But there were so many of them that one was afraid of the other. He only hesitated, and said he would see. We waited on till daylight and no one came. We looked anxiously at the hills all round in hopes of seeing our troops on the hills, but could see nothing. We waited and watched anxiously, and thought we should have a day of suspense. About 8 A.M. on Tuesday, 5th June, large bodies of men were visible to the west, about seven miles off, but it was impossible to say whether they were our men or Boers. Even if they were our men, it was possible that we should be hustled off under their noses. About 9 A.M. two men in felt hats and kharki and a civilian galloped up. Even till they were 100 feet off I feared they might be Boers. Then they took off their hats and waved them; there was a yell, and we all rushed through the gate. They were Marlborough and Winston Churchill, and we were free!

Some of the late prisoners rushed out of the enclosure down hill into the town, scampering and yelling. It was so good to be free! It was so grand to feel that the scene of their incarceration had already almost become British soil! One climbed up the flagstaff with the Union Jack in his mouth and fastened it at the top (the great emblem, manufactured from a Transvaal flag, had been held in readiness for many months). There, in the town, were British sentries over all the Government buildings, over the house of the President—where Mrs. Kruger still remained—and over all the banks, and in the square. But the smart guardsman of Pall Mall was nowadays strangely transmogrified. Battered and travel-stained in his shabby kharki and worn helmet—the latter perhaps adorned, in lieu of plume, with tooth-brush, spoon, or other useful article—and equipped with loaf or cook-pot, or like practical paraphernalia not laid down in the regulations, he made a quaint, yet inspiring picture of martial vagabondage. But to the eyes of his long-expecting fellow-countrymen he was none the less refreshing, almost adorable, and in a perfect frenzy of rejoicing the prisoners laughed and threw up their hats and waved their arms like very lunatics freed from strait-waistcoats, or the thrall of the padded room.

The chief was not timed to arrive till two, but long before

## The Transvaal War

that hour the prisoners of war were drawn up in the square to feast their eyes with a sight for which they had hungered wearily, some of them since the grievous autumn days when they had found themselves in Dundee hospital at the mercy of the Boers. And sure enough the spectacle that then followed was worth waiting a lifetime to see, and one which none who witnessed it will ever forget.

To return, however, to Johannesburg, and to those who, during this time of terrific suspense, were marching as fast as legs would carry them to take possession of the Boer capital.

### FROM JOHANNESBURG TO PRETORIA

June had opened more than propitiously. It found Lord Roberts with the British flag hoisted in Johannesburg, and within appreciable distance of seizing the capital, while in the southern portion of the Free State, rebellion was known to be nearing its conclusion. General Brabant—after some exciting experiences at Hammonia, in which Lieutenant Langinere (Border Horse) was severely wounded, and Lieutenants Boyes and Budler were made prisoners—had just joined hands with General Rundle. The former was engaged in watching the passes around the Basuto border, while the latter, with his usual vigilance and animation, mounted guard over the region between Ficksburg and Senekal. Here (at Senekal) General Clements caught up the chain and made his Brigade into a connecting link with the forces of Lord Methuen, which were at Lindley, forty miles to the north, which latter place was within communicable distance of Heilbron, where General Sir H. Colville with the Highland Brigade kept clear the passage to the north. Thus it will be seen a complete cordon of communications was maintained, which formed a barrier to further inroads by the Free Staters, and forced them little by little to take their choice between surrender or flight.

At the same time a change had been wrought in the condition of affairs, and the Orange Free State had been rechristened the Orange River Colony.

At noon, on the 28th of May, an interesting ceremony had taken place in the Market Square at Bloemfontein and the Royal Standard had been hoisted. General Pretymann (Military Governor), surrounded with a vast concourse of persons, both British and Dutch, had read in an impressive voice for the benefit of all concerned, Lord Roberts's proclamation annexing the Orange Free State—which had been conquered by Her Majesty's Forces—to the Queen's dominions. He had then declared that henceforth the State would be recognised as the Orange River Colony,

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SCENE IN PRETORIA SQUARE, JUNE 5: WAITING FOR THE ENTRY OF  
LORD ROBERTS AND HIS ARMY

Drawing by A. Pearse, after a Photograph by the Earl of Rosslyn



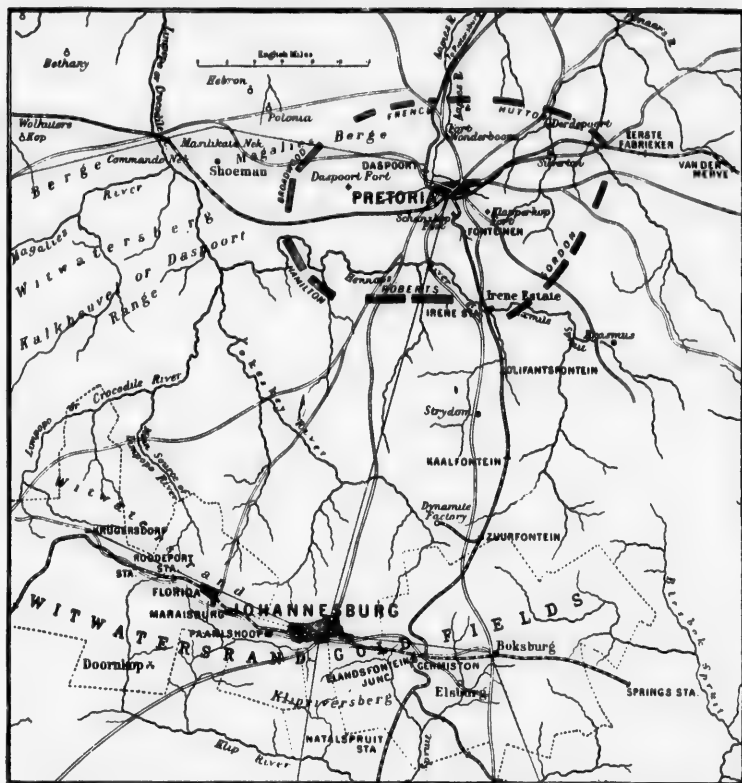
## From Johannesburg to Pretoria

after which the troops presented arms and a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by the Naval Brigade and Royal Artillery, followed by lusty cheers for the Queen. At the same time a very different scene had been enacted in Pretoria. By the order of President Kruger, the day had been observed as one of humiliation throughout the country; humiliation and prayer for relief from oppression and preservation of the independence of the country—the country whose independence had been wrecked entirely by the ignorant and careless pilotage of the President himself.

In Johannesburg itself quietness soon began to reign, the people coming in resignedly to give up arms. On the whole there seemed to prevail a general sentiment of surprised relief at the peaceful mode of British occupation, and a dawning hope that before long hostilities would come to an end, and life resume its workaday habit. For the first two days of June the chief remained encamped at Orange Grove in order that all the troops, rested from their fatigues, might be gradually moved up so as to surround Pretoria, north, west, and south. But meanwhile the cavalry made a reconnaissance, and in course of the operations Lieutenants Durrand, Sadleir, Jackson, and Pollock, 9th Lancers, were wounded. The latter officer was missing, as was also Lieutenant the Hon. C. M. Evans-Freke, 16th Lancers.

From Johannesburg to Pretoria the distance is about thirty miles by road. East and west of Johannesburg for some 100 miles runs the Witwatersrand ridge, which commands the town and offers a strong position against any enemy advancing from the south. At Boksburg, on the east, are various natural redoubts of rubbish heaps thrown up from the mines, whose hideous chimneys rise clear against the cloudy atmosphere of the swarming city. Further on comes a species of desert, dotted now and then with a green oasis, and sliced with valleys wrinkled with undulating ridges, and beyond that, Pretoria. The town sits, so to speak, in the lap of hills, each hill crowned with forts, of which the two most formidable faced south, as menace to all invaders. The natural disposition of the surrounding heights makes it possible for a small force to resist a strong one with comparative ease. On the north a girdle of eminences, each a rocky and frowning fortress, renders approach in face of the enemy well-nigh impossible. Beyond Six-Mile Spruit, which lies some twenty-six miles from the Rand, and six from the capital, are three more frowning ridges, natural strongholds. And these it was necessary to assail. Both Schanzkop to west and Klapperkop to east of the line looked gaunt and ominous, the very fire and sword of the cherubim, and the approaches were charred black by intentional veldt fires so as to serve as black-

## The Transvaal War



MAP SHOWING DISTRICT BETWEEN JOHANNESBURG AND PRETORIA, AND THE POSITION OF  
THE BRITISH FORCES ROUND THE LATTER.

## From Johannesburg to Pretoria

boards to throw up any demonstrations in chalk-grey kharki. It was here, nevertheless, that the chief had decided to make his entry to Pretoria, keeping the direct Johannesburg road, and avoiding if possible the more dangerous of the fortified positions.

On the 3rd of June the great march was resumed. The army moved in three columns—the Cavalry Division under General French on the left, General Ian Hamilton's force in the centre, the main column, consisting of Pole-Carew's Division and Maxwell's Brigade of Tucker's Division (General Wavell's Brigade was left to hold Johannesburg), Gordon's Cavalry Brigade (covering the eastern flank) and the corps troops under the chief's direct command bearing towards the line of rail as described. Colonel Henry, with Ross's Mounted Infantry, Compton's Horse, the Sussex Yeomanry, the Victorian Rifles, the Colt Battery, and J Horse Battery, formed the advance guard of the main column, while Colonel de Lisle's 6th Mounted Infantry formed the advance guard of General Ian Hamilton's Division.

At dawn, on the 4th of June, Colonel Henry came in touch with the enemy at Six-Mile Spruit. Report had hinted that the Boers could not decide to offer opposition to the entry of the troops, and it was hoped that no serious fighting was intended. But there was tough work to come. The enemy opened fire and forced the troops to take cover for a time; but, afterwards, holding their own, they pushed on in view of Schanzkop and Klapperkop, the forts which yet suggested horrible possibilities. The enemy was also ensconced in sangars on other ridges round about, and assiduously plied their magazines. Then followed an artillery contest between J Battery and the guns of the Dutchmen, while Ross's Mounted Infantry, hastening to the left, secured a position from which another battery was enabled to join in the thunderous chorus.

No sooner was it found that Colonel Henry was definitely engaged, than General Ian Hamilton, who was somewhat west of the main army, was ordered to combine and assist the now warming operations—and presently his mounted troops had reinforced the advanced line, while the artillery of the main column came vigorously into play. A big gun from Schantz Fort sounded; a reply from the blue-jackets spat out. Lyddite burst over the feebly demonstrating Boers and damaged them, and showed them, that if they asked for it, there was more to come. At three, fifty guns threatened in concert—an argument that was well-nigh conclusive. Meanwhile up came the infantry, grandly steady in their advance. To right went the Guards' Brigade over the blackboard prepared for them, while Stephenson's Brigade, with Maxwell's Brigade on its left, forged straight ahead. There were kindly boulders which presently covered them, and allowed them to



THE POSITION OF



## The Transvaal War

open a warning fire with rifles and Maxims. The Boers by this knew what to expect. They knew that their hours in their commanding kops were numbered; they knew by this time that the bayonet's gleam might follow, and then—

They had little time to consider. General Broadwood's troopers were making for their right flank, debouching in the distant plain on the left, circling them round, menacing their retreat. Up the kopjes swarmed the infantry, away towards the enemy's flank galloped the cavalry—bang and boom and boom roared the heavy artillery, addressing the forts that had seemed to play the cherubim to British advance. These were mute. The projectiles battered them or passed on into the town itself whence rifle fire burst out in fitful cascades, but resistance was no longer in the Dutchmen. . . . It was now growing dusk. Colonel de Lisle's sprightly Australians, cutting across country, were chasing Boers and guns almost into the town, while the infantry with sunset, were occupying the coveted positions—were handling the key of Pretoria!

But the Australians, darkness or no darkness, were on the war-path—nothing could stop them. They captured the flying Maxim of the flying Dutchmen, pursued them till they were within rifle fire of the streets—the streets where scurrying and panic-stricken forms were to be seen like ants disturbed, running hither and thither. Then Colonel de Lisle, equal to the occasion, profited by the general dismay and the demoralisation to send in an officer under a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the town.

An account of this momentous episode was given by Lieutenant W. W. Russell Watson, a Sydney officer, who was the most prominent actor in the proceedings:—

"Colonel de Lisle came up, beaming with delight, and said, 'Now, lad, you have done so well, are you fit to take the white flag into the city and demand the surrender of the city in the name of Lord Roberts and the British army?' 'Rather!' said I. So we tied a handkerchief on to a whip, and after saying good-bye to Holmes and the others, I started for the Landdrost of the capital with the white flag in the air alone and unarmed.

"I had not gone far when I was stopped by an artilleryman, so requested him to take me into town. He did so; but the Landdrost (chief magistrate), the Burgomaster (mayor), the Commandant-General, were still fighting on the hills about the city, so the Secretary of State was found, and he conducted me to Commandant-General Botha's private residence. He then telephoned to the Secretary for War, and they then despatched messages to their Generals to come at once to a council of war. First, General Botha himself came; then Generals Meyer and Walthusein and the military

## From Johannesburg to Pretoria

governors of the city. By this time I had been there two hours, during which time Mrs. Botha kindly gave me coffee and sandwiches, which, as I had not had a square meal for thirty-six hours, were most acceptable.

"Now came the discussion of the council. The General asked my mission, and this I told him with as much dignity as I could muster. He looked me up and down, and told me to be seated. They all spoke in Dutch, and some of the Generals were very excited. However, after an hour's chat, they drew up a letter, and Botha informed me that if I would conduct the Governor of the city to Lord Roberts, terms and conditions would be arranged. So they all shook hands with me, and said that I ought to be pleased at meeting their greatest statesmen and Generals.

"Off I went with the Governor and General Walthusein to Colonel de Lisle, who was waiting on the outskirts of the city for my return. The Colonel then joined us, and away we went to Lord Roberts, who was six miles off; so we did not arrive until 10.45 P.M. He was in bed, so just sat up and said, 'How do you do? If General Botha wishes to discuss with me the unconditional surrender of the town, I will meet him at Colonel de Lisle's camp at 9 A.M. to-morrow. In the meantime, I will not fire a shot. Good-night!'"

So unconditional surrender it was, and that at the cost of little more than seventy killed and wounded.

The report of the chief was as follows:—

"Shortly before midnight I was awoke by the officials of the South African Republic, Sandburg, Military Secretary to Commander-General Botha, and a general officer of the Boer army, who brought me a letter from Botha, proposing an armistice for the purpose of settling terms of surrender.

"I replied that I would gladly meet the Commander-General the next morning, but that I was not prepared to discuss any terms, as the surrender of the town must be unconditional.

"I asked for a reply by daybreak, as I had ordered the troops to march on the town as soon as it was light.

"In his reply, Botha told me that he had decided not to defend Pretoria, and that he trusted that the women, children, and property would be protected."

The next morning the main army moved on towards the railway station, while General Ian Hamilton's troops wound their way to the west of the town. (General French, it may be noted, had made his way to the north, and had skirmished himself into possession of an enveloping area.) Pretoria was now in sight. But even as the troops neared the railway station, trains—trains bearing away the surrendering Hollanders—were seen to be steaming forth. A chase followed, but barbed wire, gardens, houses, made pursuit impossible,

## The Transvaal War

and one train escaped. Others which were still in the station, however, were arrested, but not before a scrimmage of a bellicose kind had taken place between Major Shute, the advance guard, and the would-be fugitives. Then followed the release of the British prisoners and the excited rushing of the emancipated ones through the town. Meanwhile Major Maude and his party moved along amid the expectant populace, placing sentries at important points in the road, to the tune of the roars and cheers from the British prisoners, who—many of them—were almost wild with enthusiasm. After having secured the government buildings, the officers of the Staff attached to the Guards' Brigade paid their respects to Mrs. Kruger, who, attired in black silk and a white cap, received them with her usual Dutch calm, in the cottage where the old statesman was wont to live in almost peasant-like simplicity. Here, not many days ago, the most interesting, if not the most admired, figure of latter-day history had smoked the cavernous pipe which was his invariable companion. Here, not many days ago, sitting in the shady verandah and guarded by two policemen, and the white marble lions given him by Mr. Barnato, he had plotted and schemed behind the impenetrable mask that served him for a face. Now he was gone; and the great marble lions, massive and obdurate as ever, had become as the emblems of British majesty. The commanding officer informed the wife of the late President that the burghers guarding the Presidency would now be replaced by British soldiers, whereupon the Dutch guard placed pistols and ammunition on the pavement by the side of the marble monsters; and their occupation, now and henceforth, was ended!

At two o'clock, on the 5th of June, came the grand finale. Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, the Staff, and foreign attachés, numbering nearly 300, formed up in the main square in the centre of the magnificent official buildings, and there, once more, was hoisted the British flag amid the cheers—sincere and insincere—of the populace. Then followed the great spectacle—a pageant wherein was asserted the majesty of Great Britain—in the form of an unending host of muscular and disciplined heroes. The roll of drums, the flow of kharki, the clank and clang of armed men, began and continued for hours and hours, while the amazed inhabitants, arrayed in their bucolic best, wide-mouthed, wide-eyed, stood watching the vast procession, the like of which the little town had never before beheld.

Particularly remarkable among the vast cortège of seasoned warriors were the patriotic C.I.V.s, whose soldierly bearing drew forth eulogies from the chief himself. All were agreed that they were the finest body of men that had ever been seen, and every one declared that their actions had been as excellent as their appearance.

## From Johannesburg to Pretoria

A not less attractive feature of the great day was the march past of the Naval Brigade, its smart amphibians, its jolly blue-jackets so square and brawny and brave, and its big guns on improved gun-carriages, all of which had done such good work from beginning to end. The roar that greeted them as they swung along the streets of the conquered town was a sound to echo in the memory for many a year to come.

At such an imposing spectacle in so primitive an arena our enemies—real or subsidised—of course, took the opportunity to scoff. True, the ceremonial was scarcely as impressive as might have been the occupation of some less primitive capital; but its significance was twofold, and had ramifications far beneath the surface. The importance of the event to the British nation, and indeed to the whole European audience of critics, could not be over-estimated. For, not a spectacle, but a symbol was intended. Great Britain came, not to conquer new territories, nor to acquire new power. She came to assert herself, and maintain her prestige in the face of the whole world, and meant, by the occupation of Pretoria, to mark the new epoch, drawing a line between the old era of maladministration, chicanery, and despotism, and a fresh one of law and order, and equal rights for white men. The great object of the war, therefore, had been achieved.

In October 1899, the Government of the South African Republic had sent an ultimatum to the Government of the British Empire. To this there could be but one answer, and that answer was given. Lord Roberts, in the month of March 1900, seized the capital of the Orange Free State, and in June took possession of the capital of the Transvaal, and from that time the two South African Republics virtually ceased to exist. Within appreciable distance we now saw before us a vast British Empire stretching from the Cape to the Zambesi, and a huge population—a mixed population consisting of a majority of Kaffirs and a minority of Dutch and English-speaking Europeans—cemented together by the most just and fair of all laws—British law. If the principles that guide this law had been followed by the two extinct Republics, which had owed their very existence to British toleration and British magnanimity, they would have continued to live and to prosper, and to develop in harmony with their own interests and those of the Mother Power which, so to speak, had afforded them the protection to promote their own growth. But, having grown, having battered on the advantages of their position in relation to the British, they became inflated with the idea of their own importance, and denied to the English-speaking settlers in the Transvaal that liberality of treatment which was extended to their own countrymen in the

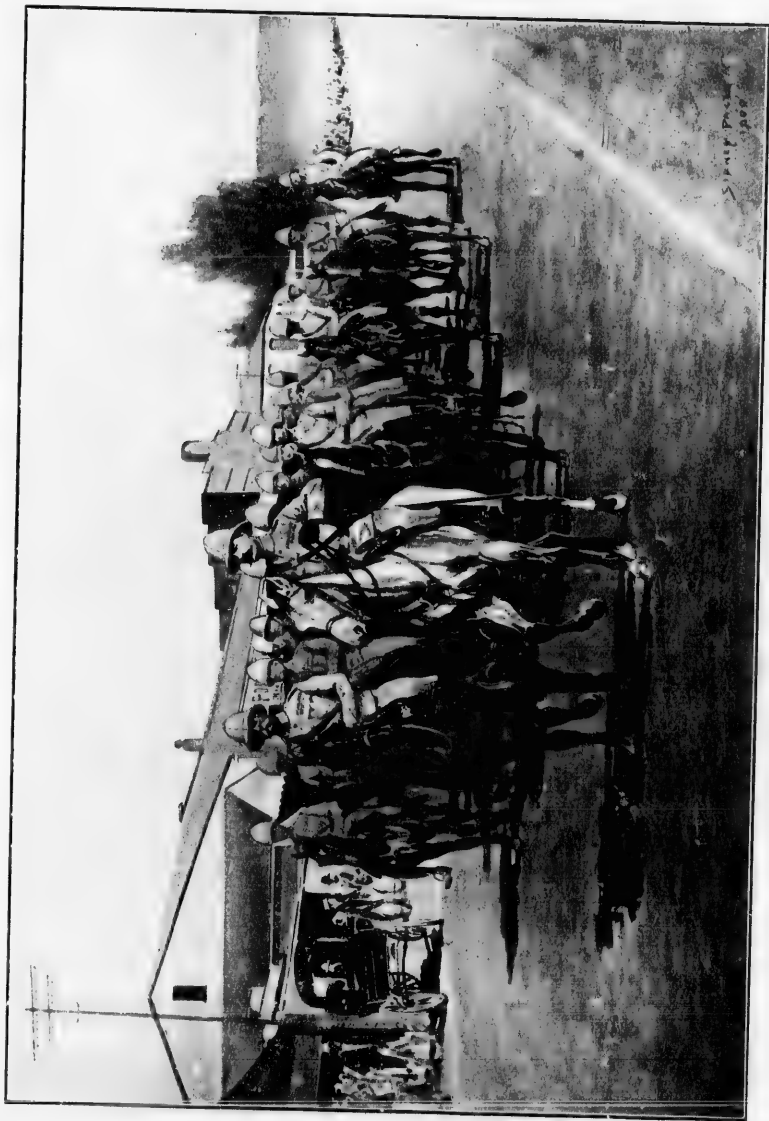
## The Transvaal War

British colonies. The arrogance of this denial, and the success in maintaining it for many years, gave birth to more arrogance still. The British at last were not only to be trodden down, but were to be driven into the sea!

That Mr. Kruger should have so far lost his sound common sense as to dream of an ascendancy of the Dutch in South Africa, was due partly to the misleading representations of needy foreigners and *chevaliers d'industrie*, who endeavoured to convert the President into a figurehead for their own piratical cruiser, and also to the folly of certain self-seeking British politicians, who tried to persuade the shrewd Dutchman into a belief in Boer arms and Boer diplomacy, and actually deceived him with the notion that their sympathetic bleats represented the trumpet voice of the British nation! It became necessary to teach him his mistake, and the lesson was taught. Thus it came to pass that, at the end of a long and really remarkable career, the despot was fleeing as fast as steam would carry him from the scene of his life's labours, while Lord Roberts, crowned with years and honour, reigned in his stead!

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THE ENTRY OF LORD ROBERTS AND STAFF INTO PRETORIA

After a Photograph by the Earl of Roslyn



## APPENDIX

### REARRANGEMENT OF STAFF

The following rearrangement of divisional and brigade commands in South Africa took place during the month of April :—

#### CAVALRY DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General J. D. P. French commanding.

- 1st Brigade (Cape)—Colonel (Brigadier-General) T. C. Porter, 6th Dragoon Guards.
- 1st Brigade (Natal)—Lieutenant-Colonel (Brigadier-General) J. F. Burn-Murdoch, 1st Dragoons.
- 2nd Brigade (Cape)—Colonel (Brigadier-General) R. G. Broadwood, 12th Lancers.
- 2nd Brigade (Natal)—Colonel (Major-General) J. F. Brocklehurst.
- 3rd Brigade (Cape)—Colonel (Brigadier-General) J. R. P. Gordon, 17th Lancers.
- 3rd Brigade (Natal)—Colonel (Major-General) Lord Dundonald.
- 4th Brigade (Cape)—Colonel (Major-General) J. B. B. Dickson, C.B.

#### MOUNTED INFANTRY.

Colonel (Major-General) I. S. M. Hamilton, C.B., commanding.

- 1st Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) E. T. H. Hutton, C.B.
- 2nd Brigade—Colonel (Brigadier-General) C. P. Ridley.

#### 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION (CAPE).

Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen commanding.

- 1st Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) C. W. H. Douglas.
- 2nd Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) A. H. Paget, Scots Guards.

#### 2ND DIVISION (NATAL).

Lieutenant-General Sir F. Clery commanding.

- 2nd Brigade—Major-General H. J. T. Hildyard, C.B.
- 4th Brigade—Colonel (Brigadier-General) C. D. Cooper, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

#### 3RD DIVISION (CAPE).

Major-General Sir Herbert Chermide, commanding.

- 2nd Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) R. E. Allen.
- 3rd Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) W. G. Knox, C.B.

#### 4TH DIVISION (NATAL).

Lieutenant-General Hon. N. G. Lyttelton, C.B., commanding.

- 7th Brigade—Colonel (Brigadier-General) W. F. Kitchener, West Yorkshire Regiment.
- 8th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) F. Howard, C.B., C.M.G.



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## 5TH DIVISION (NATAL).

Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren commanding.

10th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) J. T. Coke.

11th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) A. S. Wynne, C.B.

## 6TH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General T. Kelly-Kenny, C.B., commanding.

12th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) R. A. P. Clements.

13th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) A. G. Wavell.

## 7TH DIVISION (CAPE).

Lieutenant-General C. Tucker, C.B., commanding.

14th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) J. G. Maxwell.

15th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) C. E. Knox.

## 8TH DIVISION.

Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie Rundle commanding.

16th Brigade—Major-General B. B. D. Campbell.

17th Brigade—Major-General J. E. Boyes.

## 9TH DIVISION (CAPE).

Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Colville commanding.

3rd (Highland) Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) H. A. MacDonald, C.B.

19th Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) H. L. Smith-Dorrien, Sherwood Foresters.

## 10TH DIVISION (NATAL).

Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Hunter commanding.

5th Brigade—Major-General A. F. Hart, C.B.

6th Brigade—Major-General G. Barton, C.B.

## 11TH DIVISION (CAPE).

Lieutenant-General R. Pole-Carew, C.B., commanding.

Guards Brigade—Colonel (Major-General) I. R. Jones, Scots Guards.

18th Brigade—Colonel (Brigadier-General) T. E. Stephenson, Essex Regiment.

## DEATHS IN ACTION AND FROM DISEASE

The following is a list of the officers who died in South Africa between January and June :—

### JANUARY 1900

- 4.—In action at Colesberg: Major C. Bateson Harvey, Lieutenant A. V. West.
- 5.—Disease: Major C. P. Walker, Lieutenant C. P. Russell, Lieutenant C. S. Platt.
- 6.—In action at Rensburg: Lieutenant-Colonel A. J. Watson, Lieutenant F. A. P. Wilkins, Lieutenant S. J. Carey, Lieutenant C. A. White. Action at Ladysmith: Lieutenant-Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, V.C., Major Miller-Wallnutt, Major R. S. Bowen, Major F. Mackworth, Captain W. B. Lafone, Lieutenant C. E. M. Walker, Lieutenant L. D. Hall, Lieutenant R. J. T. Digby-Jones, Lieutenant H. N. Field, Lieutenant W. F. Adams, Lieutenant J. E. Pakeman, Lieutenant Noel M. Tod, Second Lieutenant W. H. T. Hill, Second Lieutenant F. H. Raikes, Second Lieutenant G. B. B. Denniss. Wounds received at Colesberg: Captain A. W. Brown.
- 11.—Wounds received at Ladysmith: Captain the Earl of Ava.
- 13.—Fever: Lieutenant W. Dixon Smith.
- 15.—Fever at Pietermaritzburg: Lieutenant E. Stabb, R.N.R.
- 16.—Dysentery at Pietermaritzburg: Major F. F. Crawford.
- 19.—Fever at Mooi River: Second Lieutenant D. B. Gore-Booth.
- 20.—Wounds received at Venters Spruit: Captain C. A. Hensley. Action at Potgieters: Major C. B. Childe.
- 21.—In action at Potgieters: Captain C. Ryall. Wounds: Captain A. D. Raitt. In action: Lieutenant-Colonel Buchanan-Riddell, Capt. F. Murray, Captain C. Walters,

- Lieutenant R. Grant, Lieutenant J. W. Osborne, Second Lieutenant H. G. French-Brewster.
- 23.—In action at Chieveley: Captain H. W. de Rougemont.
  - 24.—Fever at De Aar: Captain C. G. Mackenzie. In action at Spion Kop: Major H. H. Massy, Major A. J. J. Ross, Captain N. H. Vertue, Captain G. M. Stewart, Captain C. L. Muriel, Captain M. W. Kirk, Captain C. G. F. G. Birch, Captain the Hon. J. H. L. Petre, Captain C. S. Knox-Gore, Captain C. H. Hicks, Lieutenant J. J. R. Mallock, Lieutenant E. Fraser, Lieutenant A. P. C. H. Wade, Lieutenant H. F. Pipe-Wolferstan, Lieutenant F. M. Raphael, Lieutenant H. W. Garvey, Lieutenant C. G. Grenfell, Lieutenant P. F. Newnham, Lieutenant T. F. Flower-Ellis, Lieutenant H. S. McCorquodale, Lieutenant V. H. A. Awdry. Lieutenant the Hon. N. W. Hill-Trevor, Lieutenant A. Rudall, Lieutenant K. Shand, Lieutenant F. A. Galbraith, Second Lieutenant W. G. H. Lawley, Second Lieutenant H. A. C. Wilson. Wounds received at Spion Kop: Major S. P. Strong.
  - 28.—Fever at De Aar: Captain W. A. Hebden.
  - 29.—Wounds received at Ladysmith: Lieutenant W. R. P. Stapleton-Cotton.

### FEBRUARY 1900

- 1.—Wounds received at Venters Spruit: Captain D. MacLachlan.
- 2.—Disease at Ladysmith: Second Lieutenant F. O. Barker.

# The Transvaal War

- 4.—Disease at Ladysmith : Captain K. L. Tupman
- 6.—In action at Potgieters Drift : Major T. R. Johnson-Smyth, Second Lieutenant C. D. Shafto.
- 6.—Sunstroke at Wynberg : Captain E. Dillon. In action at Koodoesberg : Captain H. M. Blair.
- 8.—Wounds received at Koodoesberg : Captain C. Eykyn, Lieutenant F. G. Tait.
- 10.—In action : Lieutenant Buchanan, Lieutenant Carstens.
- 11.—Fever at De Aar : Lieutenant R. W. Bell. In action at Rensburg : Major G. R. Eddy.
- 12.—In action at Rensburg : Major A. K. Stubbs, Lieutenant J. Powell. Wounds received at Rensburg : Lieutenant-Colonel C. Cunningham, Lieutenant J. C. Roberts. Wounds received at Dekiels Drift : Captain H. G. Majendie.
- 13.—Wounds received at Rensburg : Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Eager. In action at Gaberones : Captain J. G. French. In action at Waterval Drift : Second Lieutenant H. W. Ritchie. Wounds received at Ladysmith : Major D. E. Doveton. Disease : Captain H. W. Foster. Fever at Pretoria : Lieutenant C. A. P. Tarbutt.
- 14.—Wounds received at Mafeking : Captain R. H. Girdwood.
- 15.—In action at Waterval : Lieutenant C. P. M. C. Halkett. Wounds received at Rensburg : Major F. R. Macmullen.
- 16.—Wounds received at Kimberley : Second Lieutenant Hon. W. M'Clintock-Bunbury. Action at Monte Christo : Captain T. H. Berney. Action at Bird's River : Captain E. C. H. Crallan, Lieutenant Chandler. Action near Kimberley : Lieutenant A. E. Hesketh, Lieutenant E. G. Carbutt, Second Lieutenant P. F. Brassy.
- 17.—Fever at Ladysmith : Second Lieutenant W. A. Orlebar.
- 18.—Fever at Sterkstroom : Captain T. S. C. W. Broadley. In action at Paardeberg : Lieutenant-Colonel W. Aldworth, Captain E. P. Wardlaw, Captain B. A. Newbury, Captain A. M. A. Lennox, Lieutenant J. C. Angell, Lieutenant G. E. Courtenay, Lieutenant H. G. Selous, Lieutenant F. J. Siordet, Lieutenant A. R. Bright, Colonel O. C. Hannay, Lieutenant E. Perceval, Lieutenant H. M. A. Hankey, Second Lieutenant R. H. M'Clure, Second Lieutenant A. C. Nieve, Second Lieutenant V. A. Ball-Acton.
- 19.—Dysentery at Wynberg : Captain R. A. E. Benson. In action at Hlangwane Hill : Captain W. L. Thorburn.
- 20.—Wounds received at Paardeberg : Major C. R. Day, Captain E. J. Dewar, Lieutenant J. C. Hylton-Jolliffe, Second Lieutenant D. B. Monypenny, Captain Waldy. Wounds received at Rondebosch : Captain C. H. Thomas. In action at the Tugela River : Captain S. L. V. Crealock, Lieutenant V. F. A. Keith-Falconer, Second-Lieutenant J. C. Parr. Fever at Ladysmith : Lieutenant G. W. G. Jones.
- 21.—Wounds received near Ladysmith : Captain R. E. Holt. Dysentery at Kimberley : Lieutenant Grant.
- 22.—In action at Arundel : Captain A. F. Wallis. In action at Pieters Drift : Lieutenant R. H. C. Coë. In action at Ladysmith : Lieutenant R. W. Pearson, Lieutenant the Hon. R. Cathcart, and Second Lieutenant N. J. Parker.
- 23.—Dysentery at Wynberg : Major C. H. Blount. Fever at Ladysmith : Captain G. S. Walker. Wounds : Captain H. M. Arnold. Wounds received at Groblers Kloof : Lieutenant F. C. D. Davidson. In action at Railway Hill : Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. H. Thorold and Lieutenant-Colonel T. M. G. Thackeray. In action at Pieters Hill : Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. H. Sitwell. In action at Railway Hill : Major F. A. Sanders and Lieutenant W. O. Stuart. In action at Colenso : Captain S. C. Maitland. In action near Ladysmith : Lieutenant B. H. Hastie and Lieutenant C. H. Hinton.

## Deaths in Action and from Disease

B. A. Newbury,  
Lennox, Lieu-  
t. H. J. Sordet,  
Bright, Colonel  
Lieutenant E.  
H. M. A.  
Lieutenant R.  
Second Lieutenant  
Second Lieutenant

erg: Captain R.  
In action at  
Captain W. L.

at Paardeberg:  
Captain E. J.  
J. C. Hylton-  
Lieutenant D. B.  
Captain Wal-  
at Rondebosch:  
omas. In action  
ver: Captain S.  
Lieutenant V. F.  
r, Second-Lieu-  
Fever at Lady-  
G. W. G. Jones.  
near Ladysmith:  
olt. Dysentery  
Lieutenant Grant.  
el: Captain A.  
ction at Pieters  
R. H. C. Coë.  
Lieutenant the  
t, and Second  
arker.

g: Major C. H.  
at Ladysmith:  
ker. Wounds:  
mold. Wounds  
rs Kloof: Lieu-  
Davidson. In  
ill: Lieutenant-  
Thorold and  
el T. M. G.  
tion at Pieters  
Lieutenant-Colonel  
In action at  
Major F. A. San-  
t W. O. Stuart.  
also: Captain S.  
tion near Lady-  
B. H. Hastie  
H. Hinton.

- 24.—In action at Stormberg: Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Hoskier and Captain the Hon. R. H. J. L. de Montmorency. Fever at Sterkstroom: Captain A. T. England. In action near Ladysmith: Lieutenant F. A. Stebbing.
- 25.—Fever at Modder River: Midshipman S. Robertson. Wounds received at Spion Kop: Lieutenant H. V. Lockwood.
- 26.—Wounds received at Ladysmith: Major E. W. Yeatherd.
- 27.—In action at Pieters Hill: Lieutenant-Colonel W. M. O'Leary, Major V. Lewis, Captain H. S. Sykes, Lieutenant H. L. Mourilyan, Lieutenant H. B. Onraët, Second Lieutenant F. J. T. U. Simpson, and Second Lieutenant C. J. Daly.

### MARCH 1900

- 3.—Blood-poisoning at Modder River: Captain R. Price.
- 5.—Fever at Naauwpoort: Lieutenant J. W. C. Walding.
- 7.—In action at Poplars Drift: Lieutenant D. J. Keswick. Wounds received near Ladysmith: Lieutenant E. A. P. Vaughan.
- 8.—Fever at Ladysmith: Lieutenant R. E. Meyricke. Fever at Modder River: Lieutenant S. D. Barrow.
- 9.—Fever at Ladysmith: Captain A. W. Curtis and Lieutenant C. Arkwright.
- 10.—In action at Driefontein: Captain A. R. Eustace, Captain D. A. N. Lomax, Lieutenant F. N. Parsons, V.C., and Second Lieutenant A. B. Coddington. Fever at Wynberg: Captain E. E. D. Thornton.
- 11.—Wounds: Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. E. Umphelby.
- 12.—Fever at Wynberg: Dr. W. C. Grigg. Wounds received at Driefontein: Lieutenant C. F. L. Wimberley. Fever on transport *Sumatra*: Lieutenant T. D. Whittington.
- 13.—Drowned at Norvals Pont: Second Lieutenant F. N. Dent.
- 16.—Fever at Pietermaritzburg: Major H. E. Buchanan-Riddell. Fever at Naauwpoort: Captain R. W. Salmon. Fever at Ladysmith: Lieutenant R. H. Kinnear.

- 17.—Fever at Ladysmith: Major J. Minniece.
- 19.—Dysentery at Ladysmith: Captain W. L. P. Gibton.
- 20.—Fever at Mooi River: Lieutenant A. W. Hall.
- 22.—Fever at Kimberley: Major H. J. Massy.
- 23.—Wounds received at Spion Kop: Major-General Sir E. R. P. Woodgate. In action near Bloemfontein: Lieutenant Hon. E. H. Lygon.
- 26.—Fever on her Majesty's ship *Powerful*: Fleet-Paymaster W. H. F. Kay.
- 27.—Fever at Naauwpoort: Captain F. W. Hopkins.
- 28.—In action at Norvals Pont: Colonel the Hon. G. Gough.
- 29.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain C. M. Kemble. Wounds received at Karee Siding: Lieutenant E. M. Young.
- 30.—In action at Brandfort: Captain A. C. Going. Fever at Ladysmith: Lieutenant B. T. Rose. In action at Lobatsi: Captain A. J. Tyler.
- 31.—In action near Bloemfontein: Major A. W. C. Booth and Lieutenant P. H. S. Crowle. In action at Sanna's Post: Lieutenant G. H. Irvine. Wounds: Lieutenant P. C. Grover. Wounds received at Ramathlabama: Captain F. Crewe. In action at Ramathlabama: Lieutenant F. Milligan. Meningitis: Lieutenant Whittington.

### APRIL 1900

- 2.—Wounds at Pietermaritzburg: Lieutenant C. B. du Buisson.
- 3.—In action at Reddersburg: Captain F. G. Casson and Second Lieutenant C. R. Barclay. Wounds received at Karee: Captain W. M. Marter. Fever at Ladysmith: Lieutenant G. E. S. Salt.
- 4.—Wounds received near Bloemfontein: Lieutenant F. Russell-Brown. Wounds received at Reddersburg: Captain W. P. Dimsdale.
- 5.—In action at Rietfontein: Captain C. Boyle and Lieutenant A. C. Williams.

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- 9.—In action at Wepener: Major C. F. Sprenger.
- 10.—Fever at Mooi River: Lieutenant G. H. Morley. In action at Wepener: Lieutenant H. F. B. Taplin and Lieutenant A. H. Thornton.
- 15.—Fever at sea on his way home: Lieutenant T. B. Ely. Fever at Ladysmith: Second Lieutenant S. H. Hutton. Fever at Pietermaritzburg: Second Lieutenant E. O. N. O. Leggett.
- 16.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain R. Peel, Captain B. C. C. S. Meeking, and Lieutenant C. O. Bache.
- 18.—Dysentery at Ladysmith: Captain S. Laurence. Disease at Kimberley: Captain E. M. Litkie.
- 21.—Dysentery at Pretoria: Assistant-Surgeon Jackson. Fever at Gaborones: Lieutenant Wallis. Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant H. W. Prickard.
- 23.—Dysentery at Naauwpoort: Second Lieutenant R. J. Gibson-Craig.
- 24.—Wounds at Karreefontein: Captain F. L. Prothero.
- 25.—In action at Dewetsdorp: Captain P. R. Denny. In action at Israel's Poort: Captain H. Gethin. Wounds received at Sanna's Post: Lieutenant J. D. Murch.
- 26.—Fever at Queenstown: Captain C. Biddulph. Wounds at Eirstelaagte: Captain G. P. Brasier-Creagh.
- 27.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Major H. T. Hawley. In action at Thabanchu: Lieutenant F. S. Geary. Peritonitis at Bloemfontein: Captain A. B. Bennett.
- 28.—Wounds at Bloemfontein: Captain H. F. W. Stanley. Fever at Kimberley: Midshipman L. G. E. Lloyd.
- 30.—In action at Thabanchu: Major E. C. Showers, Lieutenant J. H. Parker, and Lieutenant Munro.
- 4.—In action at Welkom: Captain C. E. Rose.
- 5.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain H. E. Dowse.
- 6.—Wounds at Callenberg: Captain Lovett. Wounds at Thabanchu: Captain E. G. Verschoyle. Wounds at Winburg: Lieutenant P. Cameron.
- 7.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain R. Fawcett and Lieutenant E. H. St. L. Chamier.
- 8.—Dysentery at Estcourt: Lieutenant S. Oglesby. Dysentery at Modder Spruit: Captain Warren.
- 9.—Wounds received at Warrenton: Major H. S. le M. Guille. Fever at Deelfontein: Lieutenant B. Cumming.
- 10.—Dysentery at Bloemfontein: Chaplain the Rev. C. F. O'Reilly. Pneumonia in Bloemfontein: Captain T. W. Milward. Wounds received at Zand River: Captain L. Head and Captain C. K. Elworthy.
- 11.—Fever at Naauwpoort: Second Lieutenant A. C. FitzG. Homan.
- 12.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain H. S. Prickard.
- 13.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant H. P. Rogers.
- 14.—Disease at Capetown: Captain D. G. Seagrim.
- 16.—Fever at Naauwpoort: Lieutenant G. B. Guthrie. Disease at Naauwpoort: Lieutenant A. Lascelles. In action near Mafeking: Lieutenant Wilfred. In action at Mafeking: Lieutenant E. Harland.
- 18.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant G. G. Moir and Midshipman J. Menzies.
- 20.—In action near Vryheid: Captain W. E. D. Goff, Lieutenant H. W. Lanham, and Lieutenant W. M'Lachlan. Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant E. W. M. Noel.
- 21.—Died at Gaborones: Lieutenant H. Wallis. Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain G. C. Fordyce-Buchan.
- 22.—Fever at Deelfontein: Major P. Marsh. Fever at Kroonstad: Lieutenant the Hon. J. D. Hamilton. Fever at Springfontein: Lieutenant F. G. Peel.

MAY 1900

- 1.—Pneumonia on board the *Ditwara*: Lieutenant C. Martin.
- 2.—Fever at Aliwal North: Lieutenant J. T. Dennis. Tuberculosis at Port Elizabeth: Lieutenant Holt.

## Deaths in Action and from Disease

- 23.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Major H. M. Browne. Fever at Boshof: Lieutenant E. L. Munn.
- 24.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Second Lieutenant Fletcher.
- 25.—In action at Senekal: Major H. S. Dalbiac. Fever at Wynberg: Captain N. G. H. Turner. Fever at Bloemfontein: Captain L. Livingstone - Learmonth. Fever at Mooi River: Major Cooper. Fever at Boshof: Second Lieutenant W. H. Amedroz.
- 26.—Fever at Kroonstad: Major A. S. Ralli and Captain W. H. Trow. Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant R. S. Bree and Lieutenant J. D. Dalrymple-Hay.
- 27.—Pneumonia at Wynberg: Captain R. N. Fane.
- 28.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant P. C. Shaw. Fever at Pietermaritzburg: Lieutenant A. Wylde-Brown. In action at Kheis: Major J. A. Orr-Ewing. In action at Kwis: Lieutenant C. Slater.
- 29.—In action at Fabers Spruit: Colonel W. A. Spence. In action near Kroonstad: Captain C. S. Keith. Wounds received at Kheis: Lieutenant G. H. Matthews and Cap-

tain A. H. U. Tindall. Wounds received at Senekal: Second Lieutenant A. H. Murray.

- 30.—In action near Johannesburg: Captain St. J. Meyrick and Lieutenant H. W. Fife. Dysentery at Pine-town Bridge: Captain J. W. J. Hardman.

- 31.—Wounds received at Elandslaagte: Lieutenant C. G. Danks.

### JUNE 1900

- 1.—Fever at Kroonstad: Captain S. Robertson. Fever at Florida: Lieutenant G. F. Nethercole. Wounds at Lindley: Lieutenant Sir J. E. C. Power, Bart. Dysentery at Bloemfontein: Second Lieutenant F. S. Firth.
- 2.—Fever at Bloemfontein: Lieutenant L. O. F. Mellish and Lieutenant C. H. B. Adams-Wylie. Wounds at Bappisfontein: Lieutenant J. F. Pollock. At sea on board the *Ditwara*: Lieutenant R. J. Jelf.
- 4.—Fever at Kroonstad: Lieutenant C. E. Eaton.
- 5.—Fever at Kimberley: Captain E. G. Young. In action at Schippens Farm: Lieutenant R. L. C. Hobson.

END OF VOLUME V.